













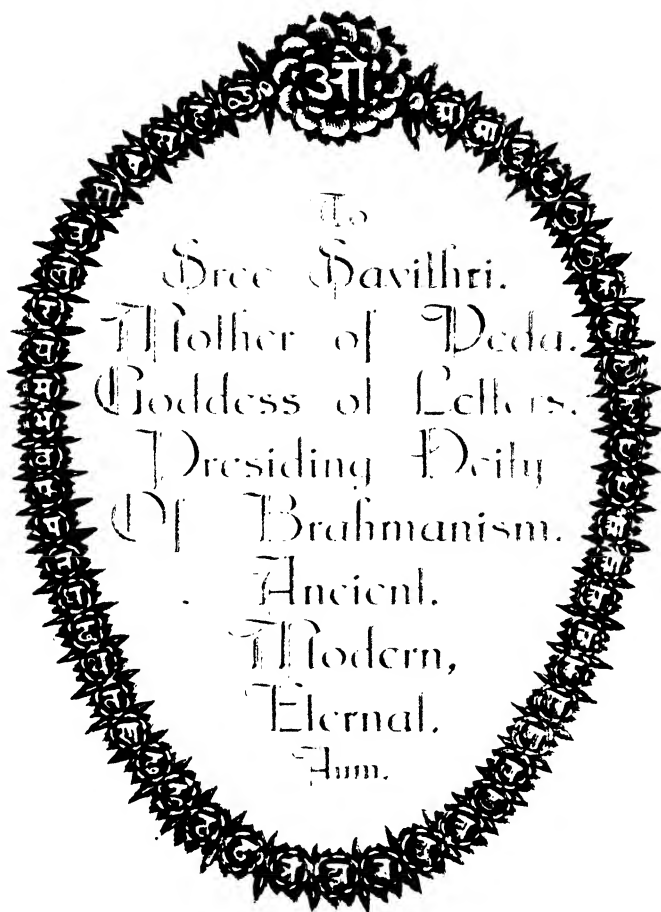


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*Sree Gopalakrishnayya :*

*Life and Message.*









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## PREFACE

On behalf of Sreemad Andhra Vidya Peetha Goshti, the Cultural Academy founded by the late Andhraratna D. Gopalakrishnayya, the author has the pleasure of presenting herewith to the public the 'Life and Message' of its illustrious founder, which it has undertaken to bring out soon after the demise of Sree Gopalakrishnayya. The volume should, in fact, have been published much earlier than now; but for reasons needless to mention here, the work has been delayed beyond our original intention or wishes.

The present publication is an abridged Edition of a much bigger and more detailed 'Story of Gopalakrishnayya' comprising 1116 pages, undertaken by the author for the benefit of a German friend of Sree Gopalakrishnayya, and latterly read before the Goshti study-circle friends in the form of monthly lectures. A fuller publication than the present one is not only impossible owing to financial circumstances but, owing to our being still too near to Sree Gopalakrishna, a number of events and incidents have got to be necessarily omitted for the time being.

On the face of it, the 'Life' deals partly with his story and partly with the message of "Universal Brahmanism" which was the life-long aspiration of Sree Gopalakrishnayya. Gopalakrishna may appear to several people in several facets,—as a politician, a Poet, singer, actor, conversationalist, etc. But to the author of this book, who for several years has been a close colleague and collaborator with the late Andhraratna, Sree Gopalakrishna has been more a Prophet than a politician. and his Message of Brahmanism, in the opinion of the author, is the greatest contribution of Sree Gopalakrishnayya which, in fact, is more precious than even the most precious life of this mad "Pearl of Andhradesa."

India's genius is spiritual—our effort mainly religio. And that too incidentally is the greatest need of the world to-day. Sree Gopalakrishnayya's Neo-Brahmanism is an attempt at our religious and social Synthesis. It is a great Message—the Message of our times; and the story of the Man who delivered that Message must be dear to us all.

In recent times, it was Swami Vivekananda that dreamed of a World Religion; but he had to rest content with merely introducing the word *Vedanta* to the West. The late Dr. Besant did some work through her Theosophy; but as pointed out by the author in the course of this book, it was left only to Sree Aurabindo Ghosh and Sree Gopalakrishnayya to conceive, in a fuller and even a more practical form, the fundamentals of a new, yet old, *Sanatana*, i. e. Eternal Religion, which, Sree Gopalakrishnayya has styled as Brahmanism. Sree Gopalakrishnayya was not spared to realise his great message in life—for he died very young; and it is now left for others to fulfil and achieve in actual flesh and blood what he merely stated as an Ideal and make his Message the Religion of India, nay of the world.

Necessarily, this Biography—if such an appellation can be used for this work,—has got to be of an interpretative variety, because a good number of the ideas and methods of the hero, though thoroughly Indian, were still far-off “madness” to our “scientific” worshippers of our modern western superficialism.

As an instance, we will just cite a conversation the author once had with an esteemed Desabhakta about the character and aspiration of Sree Gopalakrishna. When the author explained at some length the view-point of Sree Gopalakrishnayya, the esteemed Patriot declared: “The majority (in the Congress Committee) is with us.”

Author: “But God is on the other.”

~~as~~abhakta: "It is all a madness."

Author: "If you think it is 'all a madness' and that Sjt. Gopalakrishnayya is a mad-man, then, I may tell you there are others who share his madness and you may take it, I am one of them."

A reference to the Congress and its august leaders was found indispensable to the story, because Sree Gopalakrishnayya's Congressional career was no mean or small part of his life; but, generally-speaking, it will be found that the author has confined himself to the Congress of Gopalakrishna's time and rarely to the latter-day Congresses or their doings.

In a few respects, the author had to take liberties with even some of the views or actions of Sree Gopalakrishnayya; and where unavoidable, to express his strong dissent from the hero. The author takes full responsibility for these variations which, he feels, are indispensable for any truthful or truth-loving Story.

Lastly, the author has got the pleasant duty of acknowledging thanks to various persons to whom this publication is deeply indebted. Firstly to the Printers who have been a bulwark of strength and assistance to the Goshti in this and its other enterprises; then to the subscribers who have financed us to some extent; to the friends of Sree Gopalakrishnayya who gladly gave us the letters and other papers and Photographs in their possession; to the Editors of the 'Hindu', 'Swarajya', 'Andhrapathrika', 'Krishnapathrika' and the 'Congress' for allowing us a free access to their old numbers; to the Goshti Study-circle friends who, by their comraderie at the Ramanagar monthly meetings and otherwise have encouraged the publication of this and the other Goshti works; to Babu Nalini Ranjan Sircar, Lord Mayor of Calcutta, who has kindly consented to publish this Volume; and to that German Friend of Sree Gopalakrishnayya,—How shall I repay all that I owe to her?

For if God is the string in this Garland of  
     Worship that I wove,  
 She supplied me with all the Flowers,  
     She gave me all the Pearls;  
 And without her,  
 I could have placed  
 But an empty wreath around his neck;  
 For I am but a prosaic and commonplace man;  
 And it is they, our women,  
 Can beautify and ornament this earth,  
 And weave Poesy into the commonest Web of Life;  
 Without her.  
 In this search after my God,  
 I should, indeed, have been  
     stranded long ago;  
 And to her who has been,  
 Through thick and thin,  
 My sole supporter,  
 My sole inspirer, I may say, after God,  
 To her,  
 To Christel Semisch,

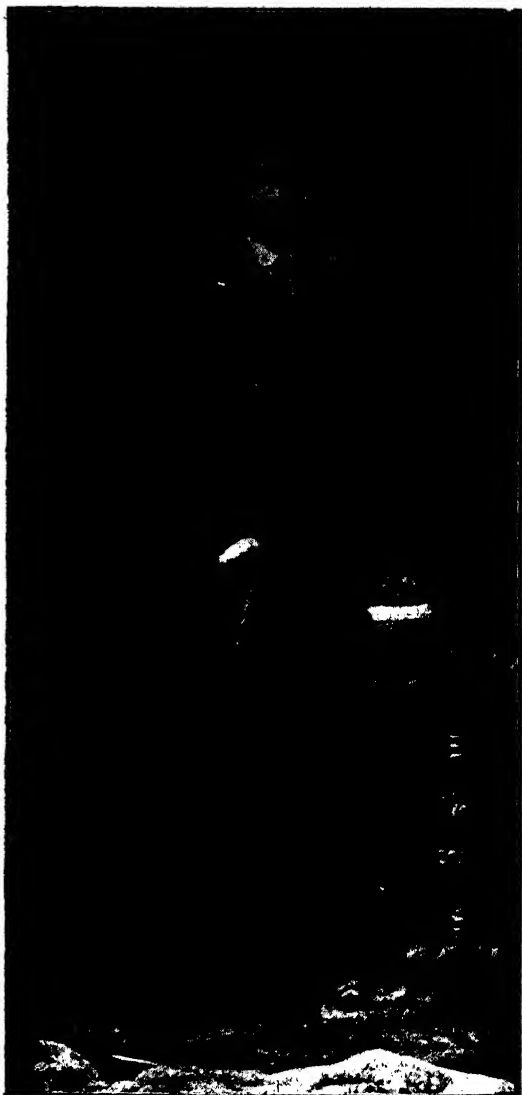
How shall I repay all that I owe?

—*The Author and President.*









yours very sincerely  
D. J. Parker

# SREE GOPALA KRISHNAYYA:

## LIFE AND MESSAGE.

### CHAPTER I.

#### Early Period (1889-1911).

SREE DUGGIRALA GOPALAKRISHNAYYA, was born on Jyeshtha Suddha Chathurdhi of Virodhi of the Telugu Calendar (or the 2nd day of June 1889 A.D. Christ) in a village called Penuganchiprolu in the Nandigama Taluk of the Kistna district. He came of a pure Velnati Vaidiki family of Harithasa Gotram with the trio of Harithasa, Ambarisha and Yavvanasva—all of Kshatriya birth—as his Rishis. His father, Kodanda Ramaswamy was a petty school-master of modest means; his mother, Sitamma, died on the third day of giving birth to this, her only child. The father married a second wife soon after but himself died when Gopalakrishna was barely three years old. Thus Gopalakrishna was orphaned at a very early age and his guardianship passed on to his paternal uncle, Mr. Sivaramayya and his grandmother<sup>(1)</sup> who was a familiar figure in the Gopalakrishna gallery. And under the mothering care particularly of this aged lady who lived on to an advanced age of eighty till 1922, Gopalakrishna spent his infancy and early childhood in Koochinapudi and Guntur, where he had his paternal properties.

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(1) See 'Speeches and Writings': The Essay on "My Grand-mother".

The period 1889 to 1911 in the life of Gopalakrishna was more or less one of uneventful childhood and play. It was the period of the silent growth of the Boy, under the loving care of his grandmother, and of his earlier frolics and studies in India. He was brought to Guntur where they had a small garden-house and was put to school there; and though, even very early, he was quick of grasp, retentive of memory, and very intelligent, he does not seem to have been good at all in application to his studies. On the other hand, he took a special delight in learning folk-lore, songs, epic poetry etc., which his grandmother taught him; and his special avocation in those days was his extra school activity, which included going out on excursions, frequenting theatres, and himself taking to the stage. In his school he came as far as the Matriculation, where, owing chiefly to his way-ward ways, he got plucked twice; and thereupon was sent to Bapatla by his uncle, where it was thought, he would devote himself more conscientiously to his studies, in a new atmosphere. Gopalakrishna, no doubt, fulfilled the expectations of his uncle in respect of his studies, and got through the Matric the same year; but he also picked up very soon new friends in that place, and in 1907 they started a new Theatre, called the "National Theatre" at Bapatla. After he passed his examination he joined as a petty employee in the Taluk Office at the same place and while in this capacity, he is said to have written a famous letter to his guardian, telling him that it is better to beg in open streets than to serve as a Clerk in a Government office. Accordingly he resigned his post and

joined the College at Guntur for higher studies. He, however, left this very soon and joined the local Mission school, as a teacher, which too he left shortly after, and proceeded to England in 1911 to prosecute higher studies.

There is an interesting incident relating to this period, which throws considerable light on Gopalakrishna's latter-day views on Money and Economics. It appears he was asked by his uncle to submit his monthly accounts for scrutiny. Even in those days, Gopalakrishna was not only free of purse, but also bad at accountancy. The result was that, in his monthly returns, he often forgot an item here or would incur an expenditure there, which his uncle might object to. The young ward therefore, would omit such items; and write instead "Imposition" against the sum thus spent. The entry was once or twice taken for the name of a book or so, by the uncle who was ignorant of English: but when the "Imposition" was repeating itself, month after month, the uncle found it out, and thereafter he never more insisted on monthly accounts. This particular trait in his character led him in his later life into one or two scrapes, from which he had to suffer a good deal; and it also illustrates the tendency of a mind, which at a maturer age, developed into a Philosophy of the "elimination of money", i.e. as a motive of Life, "from the governance of our institutions".

There is considerable evidence to show that young Gopalakrishna was deeply affected by the

political events of the first decade of this century. The Vandemataram or Swadeshi movement from Bengal had swept the length and breadth of the country; and it had its echo also in Guntur and other districts of the Andhradesa. Gopalakrishna appears to have been frequenting those political meetings and listening to and even delivering speeches on Politics and Nationalism. In 1907, he was already planning at Bapatla of schemes of a 'National Theatre', a 'National Fund' for educating the people on "all our political affairs". In 1909 he is said to have delivered some lectures on nationalism and art at the second Andhra Students' Conference held at Bandar (Masulipatam). And about this time he also led excursions of his fellow students to places, like Kondaveedu fort, the seat of the Reddi Rulers of Andhra. All these must have kindled a strong love of Liberty in his soul; and there is no doubt that the movement of 1907-08 left a strong impress on his mind.

Among the figures that stood prominently in his mind from out of the martyrs of the time must be mentioned the late Lokamanya Tilak and Sree Aurabindo Ghosh. The release of the Lokamanya from the Mandalay jail in 1915, Gopalakrishna celebrated with great eclat when he was Secretary of the Edinburgh Indian Association; and after the Gandhian "Backing at Bardoli" in 1922, he was often saying: "Oh, for a Tilak at that time by the side of Gandhiji!" Of Sree Aurabindo, the Saint of Pondicherry, Gopalakrishna wrote in his 'Sadhana', as late as 1925: "The great Reserve of





FOUNDERS OF THE ANDHRA MOVEMENT

**Left to Right:** - *Standing:* (1) Maddi Radhakrishnayya,  
(2) D. Venkayya.

*Sitting:* (1) Chatti Narasimhaacharyulu, (2) V. Lakshmi  
Narasimha Rao, (3) Jonnavithula Gurunadham.

[By Courtesy of Chatti Narasimhaacharyulu Garu]

Hope of India,.....the Prophet of Nationalism, the Poet of Patriotism, and the Lover of Humanity”.

Among the Andhra patriots the figure that attracted young Gopalakrishna most at this time was the late-and alas! the now forgotten—Jonnaveithula Gurunadham, the ardent enthusiast, thinker and statesman of Guntur, who first founded in company with a few friends, the Andhra movement. Mr. Gurunadham was both the brain and soul of the Andhra movement which followed in the wake of the Swadeshi Campaign, and was its constructive counterpart. His politics, possibly, were verging on the side of moderation of the Gokhale type; and young Gopalakrishna, however much he looked with reverence upon his talents, wisdom, foresight, enthusiasm and sacrifices, could not agree temperamentally with his school of thought, so much so that he was often joking with Mr. Gurunadham that they would get Swaraj if they tapped the ‘Home Rule’ bag which contained his papers (Mr. Gurunadham’s). Mr. Gurunadham, in his own way, was the forerunner of Gopalakrishna in the realm of Andhra politics; and it is perhaps but right that he too should have shared in his day, the crown of martyrdom which subsequently fell to the lot of Gopalakrishna in his age.

But great as was the impression made by the movement of 1907-08 on the formative mind of young Gopalakrishna, it is doubtful if he ever subscribed whole-heartedly to the main tenets of the “Vandemataram” (or Salutation to the



Mother) Ideal, which implied the worship of one's country as one's Mother. In England, the country is looked upon as the 'Mother-land'; in Germany as the Father-land; but in India among the ruling classes, at any rate, she has ever been the wife and never the mother. During the last quarter of the nineteenth century, whether owing to the feebleness of our political consciousness, or in imitation of the traditions of our ruling masters a cult of the worship of the country as "Mother", has arisen in the land, and "Vandemataram" has been the battle-cry on our political platforms since the days at least of Bankimchandra Chatterjee.

Gopalakrishna, however, received this 'Vandemataram' Mantra coolly, and himself suggested at a maturer age that "a true apprehension of the abiding relation of a political worker towards his country", should be that of "a lover towards his beloved". "Vandemataram the helpless cry of the child, has been till yesterday the limit of our emotional achievement in this behalf. .... But it is time that a correct understanding of the true relationship with our environment should begin in all our national effort. The earth may be the mother of him who is passive and lacking in self-confidence, but to him in whom the urge towards action is irresistible, he is the Lord and she is the Spouse; '*Bhu-Pathi*' he is, and not *Bhu-Putra* or *Bharata-Putra*. Indian language is there to correct us, but no one noticed it yet:—

శ్రీ! వక్షేవ భగవీ లోకేనర్వేషా మేవభూభుజం  
నభోజ్యనకర గాహ్య విప్రదత్తా వసుంధరా॥

To all the politically-minded, there can be no sisters but one, viz., the land that is gifted to the *Vipra* or Brahmin. 'That alone is unenjoyable, untouchable'. The suggestion is that everything else stands related as wife, to the statesman or Leader.....Everything else is subject to the direction of the statesman. (Sadhana I. p. 3).

His inborn genius for reviving the pristine glories of our Religion does not seem to have awakened to a full consciousness at this early age, though the elements of a future out-break are, indeed there, visible to a closer gaze. His first acquaintance with our Religion was through Sanskrit learning and through devotional song and epic. In 1898, he was admitted, by one Bharathula Mrutunjaya Avadhanulu Garu, to the 'Spiritual Path', through *Upanayanam*, or the initiation ceremony; but it is doubtful whether the significance of the ceremony and of the 'Sacred Thread' had been realised by the young initiate, though, it is remarkable how tenaciously he clung on, in later life, to the importance and sacredness of *Upanayanam*, which he designated as our "National Education", and how he attached the highest significance for *Brahmopadesam* or the initiation *Mantra*, which was the formula for the conversion of all into his new 'Brahminical' order; and of *Brahmacharya* as the course of human education in this "School of Life". Gopalakrishna was married in 1903 before he was barely fourteen years of age, the bride being a girl—relative of his, belonging to his own village of Kuchinapudi. It is said that the father of the bride was a very pious Brahmin, who used to recite

regularly *Bharatha-Savithri* and *Gajendra-Moksham* (two Epic-verses) every night; but, all told, it seems doubtful whether the marriage was a well-assorted and equi-mated one. The wife—her name is Durga Bhavani Amma—was quite a simple and ordinary country-girl; and that was all. She did, indeed, serve him—all honour for her devotion and all reverence for her service in those terrible years of Gopalakrishna's latter-day suffering—very devotedly, whole-heartedly and with infinite powers of endurance and toil; and, to be sure, no other woman could probably have endured the misery which was her lot for a major portion of her husband's career and illness. She suffered, first, on account of his long absence in England; next through his indifference and even cruelty for sometime after his return to India; then because of poverty and other vicissitudes of her husband's political career; and lastly, owing to his long and protracted illness, which meant to her a most trying ordeal, indeed, in her solitary exclusion with her husband. But the husband was noble; and the wife was brave: so the couple pulled on, and she now mothers their only son, Chiranjeevi Kodanda Ramamurty.

The main result of this period was that it took the mind of young Gopalakrishna from the realm of a merely bookish school, which he did not very much care for, to the great School of Life, which included the theatre, drama, art, folk-lore, song, politics, marriage, society, in all of which he revelled, as in a play, and he gradually expanded his horizon and thus was prepared fully to graduate himself in that bigger 'University of Life' in the West.

## CHAPTER II.

## His Stay in Britain (1911-16).

We now reach the period of his stay in England, or rather in Britain, for, the major part of this period was spent in Scotland—Edinburgh—rather than in England. He stayed for nearly five years in all there; and he came home only once during that period. Before proceeding further it is necessary to remember a few points relative to this adventurous trip to the West, which was fruitful of the most interesting and important results.

It is not easy to divine with what motive exactly he proceeded to Europe. It must have been a fashion, in those days, to proceed to a British University to pursue one's higher studies; and partly it must have been due to his characteristic love of adventure which was a passion right through his life. Partly he must have got disgusted with the dry-as-dust sort of life which he was forced to lead as a petty employee at Bapatla or Guntur; and partly, too, the desire to win a Degree—perchance to become a Barrister!—and thereby eke out a decent livelihood must have been a dominant motive.

Gopalakrishna decided on going out in company with a few friends, among whom he was of course the guiding spirit.

The manner of their starting was a particularly secret affair; for, in those days, there was still a

lingering prejudice against foreign travel; and moreover, the financial aspect of the scheme was dependent wholly on one, Mr. N. V. L. Narasimha Rao, and any the least inkling was sure to be resented by Mr. Rao's mother and brother, who would nip it in the bud. But such was the dexterity and resourcefulness of Gopalakrishna that they had successfully evaded the most vigorous searches made by the people of Mr. Rao, and the latter could learn of the departure of the boys, only after their steamer had actually left the Bombay harbour!

It is well-known that, in the one ostentatious purpose of his stay in Scotland, viz. his studies in the Edinburgh University, Gopalakrishna was not particularly diligent or earnest. It is said that he missed many lectures; was indifferent to his Professors; and was ignorant of many text-books. Naturally, therefore, he was unlucky in his examinations, though wherever he could use his original talent, he had shone brilliant, like a star. But he was not the sort of man for the modern systems of "large-scale educational factories"—of the "congregational type", as he himself used to call them—and they were not the things for him. He was always of opinion that these 'educational systems' are so many 'soul-less' organisations: and writing as late as 1925, he declared: "I wouldn't hand over my boy to any soul—serjeant, however gaudily he vends his wares". It is remarkable with what degree of consistency he suffered for his educational faiths, all along rejecting the pretensions of these organised Colleges and Universities to judge the

educational accomplishments of individual souls. Throughout his life he stood for the recognition of the principle of *individual types in educational methods*, and when one examines his entire career, one wonders not that he missed to take a degree twice, but as to how, in the end, he managed to get one! "Mine is not a utilitarian conscience", he wrote, "and I wouldn't distress myself too much if a speculation with Rs. 11,000 failed to procure at least one degree. I know what I got in return for this Rs. 11,000. It is incommensurable and invaluable too". "It is not any great love for the degree that is spurring me on thus, but it is the fact that if my grandmother learns that, after all, I returned home without any degree, she will have a most unhappy life and its end. That I sincerely wish to spare her".

At the University, he appears to have picked up some knowledge in Economics, in which he ultimately got an M.A. (Honours). But it is curious that he hated this branch of human knowledge most profoundly; and, through-out his life, he never spared the subject. Economics, which now rules the world, is, according to Gopalakrishna, the Science of destruction ("అర్థహేతువులు లయకారణములు") and the mad pursuit of the world after this economic thought and action indicates an imminent crash of human institutions. Culture, according to him, ends where Economics begins. "The study of economics is characteristic of the modern age. Mankind, after living upon this Earth for centuries, without finding any need for it so long, has at last

arrived at a stage when it cannot do without it. Economics now-a-days tops the list on the educational *menu* of every 'civilized' country." \* "Money"—"This money vitiates the real life of humanity, but yet it is hailed as the honey of humanity. Gott strafe money!" "Elimination of money from the governance of our institutions is a cardinal creed of Ramnagar". The great Ideal which he held before himself was doubtless the Rule of the Spirit itself, i.e., of God, where the world is befogged and threatened with extinction by "a positive God-less Philosophy, industrial anarchy, and spiritual famine." "Economics deals with wealth. Wealth invests all things with utilities and renders them capable of being appropriated or consumed.....Consumption decrees death to all things, a change of name and form. When mankind find themselves in an economic mood,—as we are now,—it is destruction of all things that is ordained. It is *laya*. *Layakarta* is Rudra. That is why we find the world in the vortex of a big conflagration now". "Rudra is the Presiding Deity (*Adhishtana Devata*) of Economics, the Third in the Hindu Trinity". (His Trial Statements).

Gopalakrishna also went through a course of Physiology and some medicine, in which also he

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\* Thus, while in every age, *the Book* meant the Veda, or the Zend Avesta, the sayings of Confucius or the Shinto, the Dhamma Pada or the Bible, Koran or the Grandha Saheb, in the modern age, *the Book* has come to mean the Account-Book or the Ledger, Vide the Science of Book-keeping. And that is probably why England, a "Nation of Shop-keepers" rules the world!

received a diploma. But that branch of knowledge, too was of little attraction to his mature mind; and it is noteworthy that, wherever possible, he rejected the claims for superiority of the allopathic systems over the purely Indian system of Ayurveda. And, as we shall see later on, though he was gladly an inpatient in a British hospital in 1915, ten years later, he wouldn't so much as even enter an allopathic hospital in India, for the treatment of his fell disease, to which he succumbed in the end.

But if his studies at College were not of much consequence, his stay in Britain was of the utmost significance in several respects. That he got his degree, in the end, was perhaps nothing, after all. But what is more important, here he became acquainted with the great life of the western peoples; here he met his friend, Miss Christel Semisch of Berlin, whose affianced, time, space and even death have not been able to efface; and here he met his *Guru*, Dr. Ananda K. Coomaraswamy.

Writing in June 1915 to a friend, he said: "The Dean of the Faculty of Arts has refused to admit me to the examination on the ground of the Public Law not being completed.....This circumstance, I thought, was the culmination of a series of mishaps and misfortunes which my follies and inexperience have successively precipitated during the not very enviable sojourn of mine in this country. But one thing I assure myself. I have determined to persist, and, surely, I can't do otherwise.....Disappointments, humiliations and even disgraces whose prospective occurrence is deeply concerned in the course



of one's own actions according to the normal valuation in normal conditions of life, are now to be entirely ignored in my case in view of the exclusive character of my ideals and aspirations contrary to the general run, in view also of my especial peculiarities in my incapacities and capacities alike..... differentiating them from those observable ordinarily in men". "Even at the risk of being misunderstood, I cannot but claim a different standard for the valuation of my work and achievement. If it cannot dazzle the expectant eyes of my people, it has at least given me the satisfaction of knowing more life and its possibilities than I know, and this is, after all, the more enduring, the more vitally essential part of one's achievement".

It is remarkable to what extent Gopalakrishna adapted himself to the western customs and mode of life. Being a trained dramatist, perhaps it is not much surprising; but, in dress, in habits, in talk, even in appearance and intonation, he became the Englishman! But at the same time it will be interesting to know how far he kept up his own individuality. Perhaps he was the one man among thousands of young Indians, not only of his time, but of the last 100 years, who gave performances in the Indian style in Britain—and attracted large audiences also! He retained his thought; he kept fresh his originality; and even in a trivial matter like the issuing of invitations to the Indian Association anniversary at Edinburgh, the instructions of young Gopalakrishna, who was then its enterprising Secretary, to the compositor were that it should be done on yellow paper in green ink, symbolic respectively

of the Hindu and the Muslim. It is no wonder, therefore, that when he returned to India, after tasting the life of the West for nearly five years, he was one of the least denationalized of India's youths who ever set their foot back on the native soil.

His coming into contact with Dr. Ananda K. Coomaraswamy, at present Curator of the Indian Museum at Boston, U.S.A., while he was in England, was likewise an event of first-rate importance in Gopalakrishna's life. It was possibly at the annual meeting of the Edinburgh Indian Association, of which Gopalakrishna was the Honorary Secretary, and at which Dr. Coomaraswamy delivered the inaugural address in December 1914, that they first met. At the end of the function, Gopalakrishna, as the organising Secretary, had to say 'Thanks' to the guests which he seems to have done in a neat felicitious speech, which attracted the great Artist. They met subsequently by appointment and gradually there arose a steady correspondence between the two, and finally the great Doctor drew young "Gopala" to his hermitage at Britford, near Salisbury. Gopalakrishna stayed with Dr. Coomaraswamy in all for four months and some days; and this is how he himself described and estimated the value of this stay:—

"I sought to place myself under Dr. Ananda Coomaraswamy, in whom the idealism of the East and the intense practicalism of the West are harmoniously blended. After all, *Acharyavan Purusho*

*Vedah* they say: it is only through a *Guru* (Teacher) that one can obtain the true variety of culture..... I offered to be a *Sishya* to Dr. A. Coomaraswamy, which he was delighted to accept.....and I came here to Salisbury and am staying in his house. The house is three miles from Salisbury town. It is a country-seat. How beautiful this is! He is a saintly man and his wife (Ratnadevi) and family (a little boy three years old, his name is Narada and a baby girl, name is Rohini) are so kindly to me. Their house is truly the abode of peace and happiness. He has a huge library and works incessantly. He takes our relation (of *Guru* and *Shishya*) too seriously and seems to think of hammering all knowledge into my poor brains. I like everything here so well, so quiet, so beautiful and so heavenly. There is a small garden around our house. The climate is very warm. There are no houses around within two miles from here; and for every little thing we have to go to Salisbury, three miles from here. Of course the servants in the house bring all things. There are two servants. Everything is very nice, but one thing is wanting, i.e. money..... All day, I am working in his library or in my room, and in the evening we all sit together, have some music or discussion. It is all so beautiful. I am supposed to give them 30s. a week.....Dr. Coomaraswamy works so incessantly, so regularly, and is making me follow his ways. Though I must confess that I am feeling this rather hard, but yet I feel sure I will get better shortly. Fancy getting up at 6 o'clock regularly (for one accustomed to get up anywhere between 10 and 1 o'clock) and working so

regularly and going to bed at 10 o'clock in the night! It is all so quiet around. I must say I am enjoying this life most, though when I come to do work, I am feeling a bit hard" (Letter to N. V. L. dated 23—6—1915). "The four months and odd I stayed with Dr. Coomaraswamy", he wrote on 15—12—1915, "is, in a sense, the best part of my life as yet lived. I think the stay has profoundly altered my view and knowledge of life. Both physically and mentally I am now entirely a new man. (You will be surprised to note this when you see me, I am sure). Blessed be the happy moment which inspired me to live with him, which has brought about this great metamorphosis in me".

It will be interesting to recall how the great Doctor himself had reciprocated these exciting feelings of his brilliant pupil. In his first letter, immediately after their first meeting at Edinburgh, addressing Gopalakrishna as 'Gopalakrishnarayya', Dr. Coomaraswamy wrote on 11—12—1914: "very many thanks for your kind welcome. We look forward to seeing you before long. Be sure to come." There were several more letters, asking him to come to Britford, and on 8—4—1915, he wrote: "I hope you have not abandoned the idea of coming down South". Then, in his letter dated 23—4—'15, "If you are able to visit us at the latter part of May, that will suit us very well. Also the weather will be very fine.....I am sorry to have made a mistake in your name. I was thinking of the kings of Hampi!" "I have never written any poetry!" he tells his young friend; "but when you come here I

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can show you a number of books you might find it interesting to look up.....This is very pleasant country, two miles from Salisbury. But it is not so wild and picturesque as Scotland; shall I hope you will like it. Do bring the 'tablas' if you can. Here are the names of a few books.....Birdwoods' 'Swa', 12|6 (This is quite a good book—Pro-Brahman.) etc. etc.....”

Dr. Coomaraswamy undoubtedly gave an effective turn to the fertile genius of young Gopalakrishna and he supplied him with a good deal of knowledge on Indian Art, literature, culture and Philosophy, and thus accustomed 'Gopala' to a new discipline and opened up to him vistas of new life and thought, and not only trained him as his '*Sishya*' but soon made him his co-worker and assistant. The teacher and the pupil gradually began collaborating at reviews on Rajput painting, Ajanta frescoes, Abhinaya Darpanam (Mirror of Gesture) etc. In his letter dated 29—10—1915, the Doctor wrote to 'Gopala': "I very much hope we shall have the opportunity to work together again sooner or later, for your assistance would be a great advantage to me. Perhaps I shall some day be able to afford it but at present could not think of it. In his final letter from New York, dated 10—7—1916, the Doctor subscribed: "Believe me to remain, your friend and Guru, as long as you so wish it. (Sd.) Coomaraswamy."

The disciple faithfully kept up his studentship even after this and in his only letter from India,

dated January 1925, Gopalakrishna alludes to his communion, through silence, with his "Esteemed Guruji", who occupied ever the front bench of the "Goshti of his Soul"; and he begged for an *Asirva-chanam* and an occasional contribution to his newly started journal, *Sadhana*.

It is said that Gopalakrishna's first introduction to Gandhiji was through the words of Dr. Coomaraswamy himself. If that were true, it is perhaps strange that the great Artist should introduce the great moralist to young "Gopala" as the "coming Man of India". Whatever it be, Gopalakrishna first met Gandhiji at London in 1915. The first impression on each other could not have been profound; but the imagination of Gopalakrishna continued to be fed, possibly by the hopes instilled by his Guruji; and it is no wonder, that, in 1921, when he had to throw in his lot with the national current, he chose Gandhiji for his leadership and proclaimed him an *Avatar*!

## CHAPTER III.

## Early Educational Efforts (1916—1919)

We have seen, in the last Chapter, that Gopalakrishna's stay in Britain for a period of five years at a very important and formative period of his life almost made him a man: it enlarged his mental horizon; broadened his range of life; deepened the source of love; and increased the thirst for freedom. In respect of this last, the free atmosphere of the Freedom-loving countries of the West was a great incentive to the buoyant enthusiasm of young Gopalakrishna; and the great War which broke out while he was still in Europe, further spurred on his mind to dreams of freedom for his own great, but now unfortunate country. The coming 'Fight for Freedom' in India was thus a common topic among his friends in Edinburgh; and the "gentlemen's-agreement" amongst those young dreamers was that, if they should find each other on the field, "you will spare me my life, and I will spare you yours!"

But it was not towards political Freedom that Gopalakrishna turned soon after his return to India; and his first attempts were for securing a job in Government service. He appears to have originally schemed of some business-career\*; but somehow it fell through; and, in the summer of 1917, he went to Ooty, the summer-seat of the Madras Government, in quest of a job.

At Ooty, he met Sir Alexander Cardew (Member for Revenue?) and Mr. Stone, the Director of

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\* For his earlier aspirations see "Letters".

Public Instruction; and he himself chronicled the gist of his conversation with the former. After the usual exchange of greetings and some chit-chat, Sir Alexander seems to have asked Gopalakrishna whether he was a Brahmin or Non-Brahmin. When he replied that he was a Brahmin, Sir Alexander began to laugh. At this Gopalakrishna felt keenly offended and at once rose up to go, whereupon Sir Alexander apologised and said that he meant no offence to him or to the Brahmin, that the Government really wanted Brahmins, and that the Non-Brahmin question was merely a political move.

Gopalakrishna's visit to Ooty in the summer of 1917 was also significant in that he met there for the first time, the Andhra leader, Dr. Pattabhisitaramayya, who was to prove hereafter his formidable political rival and opponent. Their first meeting is said to have been not a very cordial one. And Gopalakrishna seems to have created the impression of a too-independent sort of fellow, in the mind of the Doctor, though he must have been impressed also by the great talents of this new and rising genius of Andhra. It makes a sad contrast,—that of Sir Alexander, an English autocrat and the Andhra leader, the one fighting shy of even a modest dose of independence on the part of the most brilliant among our young men (and for the reason of this very independence, possibly, subsequently coming in Gopalakrishna's way on every possible occasion), and the other, Sir Alexander, tolerating, nay, even fully appreciating a sense of manly dignity and righteous self-assertion, and, in the long run grant-



ing him a decent job for the love of that very spirit of independence! Gopalakrishna approached Dr. Pattabhi for a place in the Andhra Jateeya Kallasala; but the Doctor was incorrigible. On the other hand, his mission to the Governmental authorities bore fruit and, though he couldn't secure a job in the department of Sir Alexander himself, yet the latter got for him, through the Director of Public Instruction, a job on Rs. 200 per mensem in the Madras Educational service. And in July 1917, G.K. Duggirala M.A., became a Professor of History and Economics in the Government Training College at Rajahmundry.

Gopalakrishna was in Government service for a brief nine months only—July 1917 to March 1918; but those nine months were eventful enough. He began his professional career under exceptionally favourable auspices. For he was young enough for a Teacher, yet none too young, being 27, he had seen and known much of life, both Eastern and Western, and was, unlike most others of the teaching profession, not merely a book-worm; and he had all the qualifications of a Teacher, such as love, sympathy, knowledge, humour, eloquence, originality, taste, a genial temperament and rich inner resources. He was buoyant in spirit and enthusiastic of method; was conscious of his culture;—for instance, to illustrate how the most abstruse of the modern theories had been successfully grasped and assimilated by our average people, he quoted how the Einsteinean “Seventh dimension” was incorporated long ago into our consciousness in a famous verse of

the *Sandhya* wherein the seven directions of spatial order are mentioned by name and pointed at by the finger by every boy, and that 'seventh sense' which is such a hard nut to crack in modern science is a matter of very clear grasp by every child in not bigoted or India. At the same time, he was narrow-minded; his service in a place where his native language is the spoken tongue gave him opportunities for illustrating and even experimenting upon some of his ideas of education; and, above all, his office gave him a chance to live, because his salary of Rs. 200 per month, though not wholly sufficient for his needs, was the most that he ever got in his life, and further there were good chances for promotion in due course.

But, at the same time, there were two or three circumstances which, in the long-run, had conspired to oust him from this happy and enviable position in life, before he was barely nine months at his post.

First of all, in this part of the world, the times are out of joint; and, in the College, as indeed, everywhere all-round, things are topsy-turvy—just the reverse of what they ought to be. For at least 700 years now, India has been a slave-land; and this long slavery has all but effaced our indigenous ideals, while the existence of a foreign, Western Government has tainted all our methods and even motive. As a result, during the last half-a-century, India has been having a sort of education which is not even permissible, not to speak of its possibility, in any other country in the world. Thus in our

Colleges and Universities, education is not only State-designed, State-controlled and State-directed and 'official', aiming at the perpetuation of the alien culture; but also for that reason and perhaps due to an ignorance of the indigenous traditions and methods, has been more or less imitatory of western institutions like Oxford and Cambridge, at their worst, if not in their best aspects. And, if an emancipated, inspired, illustrious Professor like Duggirala chanced to enter the portals of Teaching, it is no wonder that his soul felt cramped within the system; and ere long, even the 'Department of Public Instruction,' which is the chief controlling authority for these Educational-factories, found "no need" for his services.

Secondly, there were the inevitable jealousies and rivalries of his fellow Professors and the wounded pride and race-superiority of the European Principals, on the one hand, and the inexperienced and unbalanced spirit of self-assertion of Gopalakrishna, on the other, which, in a short time, came to grips and made the young Professor quit the College soon. The two European Principals of the two Government Colleges in Rajahmundry, in particular, probably felt themselves eclipsed by the rise of this new Star in their firmament; and, if proof was needed, the students of the Arts College chose for the Presidentship of their Metcalfe Hostel Anniversary the young Professor Duggirala, in preference to the mighty Ross of superior race!

Mr. Ross, the Principal of his College in particular was probably hurt that he should have beside

him a 'native' youth, outshining all his aged and experienced glory; and, it is said, he began worrying his colleague with this minor discipline and that:—that Gopalakrishna was not keeping his punctual attendance; that he was not confining himself strictly to the prescribed lecture-hours or courses; that he was breeding indiscipline among students by his too indulgent joviality; and so forth. Consequently there arose a good deal of hot-blood between the Principal and the Professor; and here is a characteristic reprimand from the mighty Principal.

“Dear Mr. Duggirala,

Let it be understood clearly that you have work here everyday from 9. 45 a.m. to 12. 30 and 2 to 4. 30. If you stay away between these periods, you will have to apply for leave. Kindly send me a report of your Conference address, as Government require it.

Sincerely yours,

(Sd.) R. W. Ross,

10—1—1918.”

But the equally proud and youthful Professor, unmindful of these orders, would go late as usual; the irritated Principal got the doors of the College closed against him; and Gopalakrishna climbed up the gate to the great annoyance of the Principal and merriment of the students!

The culmination came with two meetings which were *not* political, really; but which savoured of

politics. In 1917, the Government of Lord Pentland passed the famous G.O. 555, which prohibited students from attending political meetings. A meeting of the students of Andhradesa was held at Masulipatam to protest against the G.O. and Gopalakrishna “very nearly” attended that meeting and addressed the students in an adjoining room. Again, as President of the Metcalfe Hostel anniversary at Rajahmundry, he harboured a small ‘National Flag’,—‘Red and Green’ were the Home-Rule colours in those days—which was a gift of some enthusiastic youngster, and the President placed it on his table. And this “disloyal” act of Duggirala seems to have been promptly taken to the notice of the Government, who asked for a report of his Address. But as the address was delivered extempore, no copy was available; and this added—in the Principal’s imagination—a deliberate insult to the already wounded pride of an Englishman’s vanity; and down came the order that the Government no longer needed the services of Mr. G. K. Duggirala.

This, no doubt, was a sad turning in the life of Gopalakrishna. For it threw him out of employ once more, and this time without a chance of re-admission into any Government service, which is the most paying and secure in the land. And secondly, it cut him off—the real Teacher that he was—from the most prolific source of cultural comradeship, viz. the young and virgin student-world of the land. Finally, it brought to a sudden and premature end the many educational reforms which he was just beginning to entertain in his bosom, and thereafter,

he had once more to face an arid world, with a searching look of 'Where? Oh! Where?'

But whence is that siren song, beckoning him to come, and posing itself as a 'national call'? For the authorities of the Andhra Jateeya Kalasala at Masulipatam, notwithstanding the protests of Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya, as soon as they knew of the unemployment of Prof. Duggirala, at once offered him their accommodation and invited him to join their patriotic enterprise. And it seemed as though Gopalakrishna had really left the Ghost of a Government service to embark on a new and real life,—of free education and national culture, of noble ideals and a purer, freer, and more indigenous atmosphere.

## CHAPTER IV.

Earlier Educational Efforts (*contd.*)

The Andhra Jateeya Kalasala, or the National College as it is popularly called, is a techno'-literary High School, founded about the year 1910, and was directly a product of the 'Vandemataram' movement of 1907-08. It started under good auspices, as a protest against the existing system of education in British Indian Schools, but very soon it assumed an imitatory form. Even the Bengal 'National Council of Education' of Calcutta, which was the premier association started for the purpose, had the aim only to "supplement" the existing education of the British Indian Schools; and it is no wonder that the idea of "supplanting" our modern education had been altogether lost sight of by our 'national' educational mentors of those days.

To understand the significance of this it is necessary to travel back a little, historically. In 1854, soon after the British had completed their conquests and territorial acquisitions in India, consolidation was begun by the famous educational Minute of Lord (then Mr.) Macaulay, which laid the foundations of English Education in the Indian Schools and Colleges. From that time onwards, there was a steady attempt to capture the minds of the Indian youth through the founding of English schools, colleges and Universities and the training of the sons of the soil by aid of traditions and customs admittedly alien and even opposed to the Indian

genius and aspirations, and gradually even the language medium was supplanted, so much so that English has become to the educated Indian, the common language, where Sanskrit once ruled. The aim was of course to drive deep the roots of British rule and western culture in India; and the late Lord Curzon, at one time Viceroy of India, completed this policy by a master-stroke of the "officialising of Universities". It was a process of the alleged 'kultur' of Germany, which at one time the British accused of the German people, with the names of Germanism, Prussianism, Barbarism and what not meaning thereby an unholy conquest of one culture and civilization by another. Now this process of a cultural conquest—curiously of a great and ancient culture by one of quite recent and common-place origin—involving the poisoning of the youth-mind of India has gone on for the last seventy or eighty years and today as a result of the British educational policy in India, there are not even the traces of our indigenous schools left out, nor even so much as an educational tradition surviving in any degree or manner in the land.

The national movement at the beginning of the 20th century in India took up this position as a grievance and sought to redress it as a welcome national service. The idea was that at least our children should be protected from the virus of this alien education, even if the adults could not be saved from their slavery. And, as a consequence, a number of national schools and colleges sprang up in different parts of the country in 1907-10; and the Andhra



**Jateeya Kalasala** was one of these off-shoots of this nationalism in Andhra.

The founder of the Kalasala was one, Mr. Koppalle Hanumanta Rao, a youngman of brilliant parts. He was an M.A., like Gopalakrishna, and a B.L. to boot; but it is said that he tore off his *Sanad* lest he should be disturbed from his school-work, which certainly became his aspiration. He worked at it, heart and soul, as Principal, all his life-time, from 1909 till 1922, when he died also prematurely and he took a lot of pains to keep up the institution and make it going. He travelled over the length and breadth of the country; organised a College Alms-Day—the well-known *Deepavali Bhiksha*—and worked most strenuously to make it a success.

Mr. Rao, the founder, was assisted in his efforts by two of the foremost intellects of Andhra, viz. Dr. B. Pattabhi Sitaramayya and Mr. Mutnury Krishna Rao, both of Masulipatam. And the three formed an illustrious trio, from which emanated the many currents of our recent public life in this part of the country.

But, it must be recognised that this 'Public life' itself was very limited in its range and purpose, and, if we might say so with due reverence to the great, it was not altogether free from foreign taint, nay, even alien inspiration. In fact, their solution of the reconstruction of our Life and Dharma was merely of a reformatory type and could do practi-

cally nothing to bring about a creative synthesis either in our state or in our society.

Take, for instance, the very National College, to which Mr. Hanumanta Rao gave his life and blood; collected a couple of lakhs.—one more after his death, as Hanumantharaya Nidhi;—erected buildings, acquired lands, and invested monies in shares, deposits and debentures. There were schemes of education, curricula of studies, divisions and classes, examinations and even hostels for the Brahmin, Non-Brahmin and the depressed class boys separately. But now-a-days, inspite of solid structures and the lakhs of investment, the Kalasala was going a—begging for students! And it is doubtful if the Kalasala has produced even one Man from out of the many whom it had turned out of its portals in regular succession year after year, who is all-surrender to his Guru, the Founder, and who, in his own life, can fulfil the cause of Andhra Nationalism for which the institution was founded.

We have dealt at such length over these preliminary aspects of our recent public life—conditions more or less which Gopalakrishna had to face when he joined the Kalasala, because this chapter of his life has been most misunderstood by many, and it led not only to his severance from the Kalasala, but also to a good deal of suffering in his subsequent career.

Gopalakrishna was hardly beginning his life at Masulipatam when he felt the atmosphere around

him was getting more and more choked up and he gradually found the Kalasala became less and less attractive.

The first disillusionment seems to have come to him soon after he joined the Kalasala when he found the Chairman of its governing Body was also the President of the local Hindu High School. The discovery came to him as a shock and he expressed his surprise to the Principal, as to how their Chairman could, like a flea, "Place one foot on food and another on filth!" The bewildered Principal at once checked his young colleague and begged him to keep peace in the interests of the institution, though he had to confess to the inconsistency of their Chairman—President's conduct. This incident, Gopalakrishna used to say, explains why so many of our so-called 'national institutions' in spite of their labels of 'Nationalism' and 'Patriotism', do not really sweep off the alien things and replace them in our life. According to him what is needed is a complete reorientation and a full and undiluted faith; and without them, there can be no genuine National Education nor true self-Rule, however loudly our people may cry from public pulpits or Congress platforms.

But the end of the Kalasala stay was not yet; and the eight or nine months which he spent at Masulipatam were prolific of valuable results.

First, as might be expected, Gopalakrishna made himself the chum of his pupils and the student-world

generally adored him as their idol. And here is from a Farewell Address by the Students' Progressive Union, on the eve of his departure from Masulipatam: "We, the members of the Students' Progressive Union, profoundly regret.....your departure from this place. Your stay with us has been brief but eventful enough, to leave indelible marks of your noble soul, untainted character, and impressive personality on the student population of this place. You have brought with you the morning-glow of National Education, and sung to our ears the depth and charm of Indian Art.....,.....We shall miss hereafter, with deep regret, the sweet melody of your music, the lucid originality of your thought, and the stirring sincerity of your utterance. We shall miss you everywhere....."

Secondly, the period was one of great preparation and study for Gopalakrishna himself; and, it is said, that he used to pore over lots of books, particularly of a religious character, to equip himself for some extension and other lectures. Thus, at this period, he acquainted himself with the texts and commentaries of some of our greatest classics and scriptures, and the result of his voluminous studies is indicated today by a 100 page treatise, mostly in Telugu, dealing with the "Hindu thought and outlook on Life", being notes of a series of lectures delivered by him on what are called the "Purushardhas", or the "Human Pursuits", of *Dharma*, *Ardha*, *Kama*, and *Moksha*. A good deal of what he said was, doubtless, lost; but the surviving "notes", which have been preserved by two of his

old pupils, contain his views on many subjects, such as the ideals of mankind; the psychology of man and woman; economic thought and its place in life; Education of man; Education of woman; qualifications of a Guru etc. etc. It is a profoundly interesting treatise and, it is a thousand thanks that it has been preserved at all.\*

Lastly, his stay at the Kalasala enabled Gopaia-krishna to further formulate and clarify his own educational ideals, and to enthrone, at least in his mind, the great Ideal of the *Vidya Peetha Goshti* (or the cultural Comaraderie), which he described in his letter to Dr. Ananda Coomaraswamy later on as the ambition of his life and which he now definitely resolved to apply himself to after leaving the Kalasala.

It was this dawn of consciousness of a genuinely oriental educational institution, which was but a continuation of the Arya Sevaka *Sikshalaya* which he had hoped to build up under the auspices of the Kalasala at Tadepalle near Bezwada, when he first joined that institution, but which, at this time, was growing more and more in his mind, that was ultimately responsible for his exit from the Kalasala. For, the sort of teaching and study in the Kalasala did not satisfy his soul; and, inspite of patient trials, he could not succeed in inducing the College authorities to accept his view of thought and work. Almost at every step differences began to multiply. The system of school fees, teachers' salaries, atten-

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\* The 'Purushardhas' in Telugu has been published by the Goshti.

dance and the acquittance-roll were all repulsive to his taste; the division of students into classes, the syllabuses and curricula and the schemes of studies were all, to his mind, imitatory of the British models; the examinations and even the sectional dining-halls and techno-workshops were jarring to his conception of Education, which to him meant the throwing open of the gates of 'Brahman' (God) to the students' 'Third' or 'Additional Eye'—the *Upanayanam*. And a crisis was at last precipitated over the causes and nature of which there has been much misunderstanding and even some ignorance on the part of our people.

The causes of Gopalakrishna's alleged 'Revolt' against the Kalasala authorities have been said to be three; viz. (1) A dispute about his remuneration: That he wanted a salary of Rs. 100 per mensem, while he was actually getting Rs. 80. (2) Refusal of a 'Reference in space'. Gopalakrishna wanted that he should be provided with a house, which he could call his own; but that the college authorities found it impossible to satisfy his demand; and (3) that he "claimed to be made the Principal of the Kalasala", thus ousting Mr. Hanumantha Rao from his illustrious position.

On all these three counts, the Committee appointed by the National University of Madras, to enquire into the resignations of Duggirala and other teachers of the Kalasala, consisting of Messrs. T. V. Venkatarama Iyer, N. Subba Rao Pantulu and C. V. S. Narasimharaju, gave an *exparte* verdict against Gopalakrishna; and owing to their repetition

*adnauseam* by his critics the facts of each case may be stated here briefly. It may be added that the Committee was 'boycotted' by Gopalakrishna, owing to want of faith.

(1) Request for Rs. 100 salary. This exists from the very beginning of his negotiations for service in the Kalasala. So early as April, 1918, in a letter to Mr. K. Hanumantha Rao, Gopalakrishna wrote: "I won't believe in it (sacrifice) and can't do it. There are none in our country who have sacrificed themselves for the cause without securing their worldly situation.....I am one of those who believe and love the good things of the world". And a pay of Rs. 100 per mensem was specifically stipulated in his terms of service, and was even finally accepted by Mr. Hanumantha Rao, in his letter dated 9th May, 1918 thus: "I have after long thought come to a kind of conclusion. I hope you will find it satisfying. The College gives you the maximum life members' pay, Rs. 60 per month. As an extra, I will find you from a fund at my disposal, Rs. 200 a year, to be paid in two instalments of Rs. 100 each. Balance Rs. 200 to be found by publishing of booklets—you and I—for school-boys of national and other schools. I am almost confident of the latter sum, because our position in the National Council of Education will give us sufficient influence there." The arrangement was soon found to be unworkable and, with the permission of the Principal, Gopalakrishna put in a request for raising his salary to Rs. 100 per month, which was considered an impossible proposition!

(2) Request for a house also exists from the beginning. Thus in his letter to Mr. Hanumantha Rao dated April 1918, he wrote: "I should be provided with a habitation which I could call my own. This is a thing which I need most. I must have some point of reference in space". And this was also acquiesced in by the Principal, who, at that time, was anxious to secure the services of Gopalakrishna for the Kalasala and even an arrangement for the purpose was suggested. It is needless to go into the vicissitudes of this arrangement, and in the end, the proposal was unfairly refused by the College authorities, when Gopalakrishna resigned. The only point worth noting at this stage is that what mattered most to Gopalakrishna was a point of principle—what he himself so beautifully characterised as "a point of reference in space" and it is but right that he insisted on it not only at Masulipatam, but at Chirala, Guntur, in fact throughout his life, for he realised ever that a house-holder without a house,—a *Grihastha* without a *Griham*—is a contradiction in terms, though unfortunately the Kalasala authorities could not grasp this well-known principle.

(3) Claim for the Principalship. This is a much misunderstood point, and the facts of the case are as follows. The original arrangement of Gopalakrishna's appointment seems to be that he should be entrusted with the Principalship of an *Aryasevaka Sikshalaya*, which was intended to be worked up as a separate institution from the Jateeya Kalasala, and over which Gopalakrishna would be given an



unfettered hand to shape it as he liked, on the ideals which he cherished and loved most at this time. Thus Mr. Hanumantha Rao, in his letter dated 27—4—1918, wrote: "We can work up that section of the institution over which you will be put in charge into a separate institution probably located at Tadepalli;" and in the same letter Gopalakrishna was told that he would "from now be constituted (its) Principal.....". But the Aryasevaka Sikshalaya was put off indefinitely, owing to financial and other reasons; and Gopalakrishna formulated alternative proposals of working thus:—

*"Case I.* If the section on which I am now placed in charge is declared to have no relationship whatever with the Andhra Jateeya Kala-sala:

- (1) The head shall have the entire direction of the administrative and cultural management of it, viz., admissions, time-tables, libraries, appointment of and allotment of work to the staff, examinations, spending of sanctioned moneys, direct correspondence with Governing Body etc;

### *While*

- "(2) The organisation of schemes of studies shall be discussed by the Board of Studies with regard to which however, for the first four years, I, as the head shall have discretion to claim my right of final decision.

After this period, I surrender this too, because the scheme by that time comes into a working order and the others will be then in a position to clearly acquaint themselves with all the possibilities of the scheme.

“*Case II*: If this section is already acknowledged to be an integral part of the institution, then,

- (1) The first proposition above applies to the Andhra Jateeya Kalasala;—

and the  
2nd also”.

That these were fair proposals for working up a great and novel scheme of studies, every fair-minded person will admit; but the Kalasala authorities wouldn't hearken to any such proposals, which, therefore, had to fall through.

The Enquiry Committee above referred to was evidently misled to form the conclusions which it had come to; and at least one of the members, Mr. T. V. Venkatarama Iyer has since revised his earlier opinion about Gopalakrishna, from which the following is extracted.

“.....I feel that I once did him (Gopalakrishna) injustice and have regretted for years that I have had no opportunities of rectifying the mistake that I then committed.....In the begin-

ning of the year 1919 there was great commotion in the Andhra country over large numbers of the teaching staff of the Jateeya Kalasala having tendered their resignations and left the College and we were requested to enquire into the causes which had led to these resignations.....At the time of our enquiry, Mr. Duggirala was invited to be present and to tender any explanation that he may deem fit to make, but he would not appear and judgment went against him by default.....Mr. G. V. S. has now placed materials before me in the shape of letters and papers in Mr. Gopalakrishnayya's handwriting which throw a flood of light on the controversy which raged more than a decade ago; on the inner working of the Jateeya Kalasala, and looking back dispassionately on what then took place, one is surprised to find how trifling were the matters really in dispute and how exaggerated was the importance attached to them amongst the thinking public of that time. It is clear to me that Mr. Gopalakrishnayya wanted a house in which he could decently live as a Grihastha, that he wanted money and that he wanted the headship of an Institution—all things which he practically had been promised—not for the purpose of self-aggrandisement (after all, Rs. 100 per mensem can go very little towards that end) but for the pursuit of ideals which he cherished and for carrying on work for the moral uplift of our countrymen, unhampered by rules and uncontrolled by any body of men, who could not think alike with him and who could not equally with him be enamoured of the principles and ideals for which he was prepared to sacrifice his life. If these

materials were available to me at the time when our enquiry was made, I can only say that my opinion would have been quite different from what appears in the report which we submitted.

“Mr. Gopalakrishnayya once laughed at self-sacrifice but he came as many did under the magnetic influence of that Great Soul, Mahatma Gandhi, and his whole career underwent an absolute change. How much Duggirala could have achieved if his life had not been so early cut off is not for me to say ; but, if appreciation for his great work, reverence for his ideals and abundant love for a sincere patriot who sacrificed all that he possessed for the betterment of his countrymen can go a little way to undo the wrong that I did him many years ago, I shall feel amply satisfied.”

Before concluding this section it will be perhaps useful to sum up Gopalakrishna's views on Education, which must be interesting to our educationists in the country.

He hated the modern “congregational” systems of education ; as such, he paid little heed to the mechanism of curricula, courses, examinations and so forth.

To him, the teacher or the *Guru* is the all important factor of education ; and without a *Guru*, all schools are but mechanical contrivances. ( “అచార్యవాన్ పురుషోవేదః” )

The *Guru* should be a man of extraordinary qualities and capacities, and realisation ; and he is

(6)

For his pupils their sole God, i.e. the creator and arbiter of their entire destiny.

The pupil, *Sishya*, is the embodiment of a soul; and education or *Sikshana* is the process of moulding that soul into a perfect manifestation.

Every pupil has a distinct individuality; and as such, the Guru should take note of the various individuations of his various Sishyas and should reveal himself, like Sree Krishna in his *Rasa-Leela*, in various aspects to suit the various phases and needs of every one of them. The method of prescribing the same course for all types is entirely wrong.

Students are not to be grouped into classes according to information gained nor are they to be handled by different teachers for different subjects; the correct criterion should be to divide them according to their *Gunas* and *Karmas* (like the Sattwa, Rajasic, and Tamasic), and pupils of one Guna are to be trained by one having a perfect mastery in that Guna or quality.

A true type of school is our ancient *Gurukulam*, where the Guru and his Sishyas form a comradeship of souls.

The modern method of large-scale production of degree-holders is destructive of the finer nature of mankind; and according to him most of our present-day teachers are murderers, though they kill only the minds. For this very reason, this soul—slaugh-

ter is a much graver crime than mere physical murder.

The aim of education is neither good character nor citizenship, neither bread and butter nor even 'knowledge-for-knowledge sake'; the true aim should be "to make every one a genius"

The methods of teaching varied completely with him; and while he repudiated the scientific and historical methods of teaching, his great ambition, as a teacher, was "to reconstruct history from ancient and popular sources". He was a confirmed and consistent iconoclast in regard to modern history, economics, epigraphy, the library and the museum habit; and the Temple, the scripture, Epic and Pura-na, mythology, folk-lore, ballad and the popular song were his favourite sources of inspiration and study.

Religious reading or recitation or even script was to him more important than mere literary reading; and a Book, according to him, ought to be an object of worship.

But religion is not mere "imposture, superstition or slaughter". "Reason, indeed, is the prophet of the new age. And the Vedic, the Buddhistic, Islamic, the Christian and other faiths can exist henceforward only by its sufferance and sanction". ('Sadhana' 3: 2).

A teacher or Guru is entitled only to his *Dakshina*; while a salary reduces him to the position of a wage-earner.

“Everyone cannot be a teacher. He who takes his job to be of transcendental importance can alone be allowed to touch my boy’s soul, though his teaching may not go beyond reading and writing”.

His teaching “certainly includes ‘reading’ and ‘writing’, and God-willing, reading realities and writing destinies”.

In other words, true Education was Atma Vidya or Brahma Vidya, which starting with Brahmopadesam goes right up to the mastery of the Veda and the becoming one with Brahman.

## CHAPTER V.

## Plunge into Life:

## Starting the Vidya Peetha Goshti.

Gopalakrishna's severance from the Masulipatam National College forms a definite land-mark in his career; and though it was more or less a leap into the dark, or as he himself would prefer to call it, a "Plunge into Life", in the sense of a first class gamble with himself, reckless of consequences, in the end, it proved a veritable blessing in disguise. And, from the stand-point of results, it will be seen that at Chirala, whither he turned now, he not only led a great and wonderful political movement, but founded an Andhra Vidya Peetha Goshti which is his greatest positive contribution to the cause of Indian thought and of the world Revolution.

After leaving Masulipatam, Gopalakrishna went to Kuchinapudi and Guntur for some months; and he made his first appearance in the Andhra Public at the Mahanandi Provincial Conference. Mahanandi is an important place of pilgrimage in the Andhradesa, being famous for its sacred Temple of Siva, and is situated in the midst of the most gorgeous and picturesque scenery surrounded by dense woods and wild forests all round. And out of that scene, Gopalakrishna made his first appearance in a unique fashion, of which here is a description from his Telugu biographer.



“Casting aside all vestiges of western civilization, adopting the style of our ancient Pandits, wearing a bare under-cloth and having an upper one over his shoulders, with a garland of beads on his neck, like the incarnation of the three-eyed Siva, having a big, red castemark in the middle of his broad forehead, discoursing on the duties of the Aryan race with friends, Gopalakrishna came to the pulpit, and in a loud and decisive voice, with sweet intonation and spontaneous clarity, quoting gems from our classical scriptures and interpreting them in thought as well as by gesture and action, he revealed to the modern mind steeped in ‘civilized’ barbarity and despicable atheism, born of an alien and outlandish tradition, the duties, nature and forms of Andhra (cultural) Idealism, and inspired them to Dharma or the Spiritual High Path” (Translated from Mr. B. V. Appa Rao’s Telugu chapters).

Gopalakrishna’s presence at the Conference of 1920 profoundly impressed its deliberations and he was now the leader of a band of young-men, chiefly, with a distinct gospel of a ‘National Idealism’ of his own, and with a definite aspiration to build up a new life in the country. And so far as the Conference itself was concerned, it was a case of “He came, he saw, he conquered”. So much so that his influence soon became an object of envy and jealousy among his Masulipatam adversaries especially, who began to revile him as a country-boor, nick-naming him as ‘Sunkara Kondaya’. The humourist that Gopalakrishna was, he took advantage of this derision of his opponents and proclaimed himself as the incarnation of the Lord Sankara, reborn in the

woods of Mahanandi, in the garb of 'Sunkara-Kondaya', to put down the evil in our men and things. There is a neat little verse, composed off-hand, in which he announced himself, which, translated, reads thus:—

“To put down the evil prattlings  
Of the Bandar clique of pretenders,  
The Sankara Himself at Mahanandi  
Has come in the garb of 'Sunkara Kondaya',  
Behold, the miracle!”

Gopalakrishna's activities at the Conference centred round two directions, viz., Political extremism and National Education.

He was responsible at Mahanandi for definitely turning the course of our Andhra politics from a dilatory path of halting moderation—into which rut they had fallen for long years—to a deliberate resolve of active Non-cooperation with the Government. At that time the political situation in the country was briefly as follows.

Everyone has heard of the Punjab massacres, where nearly 2000 men, women and children were caged in the Jalianwalabagh and brutally done to death; and following these, there was a reign of terror and repression on one side, and a bitter and determined agitation on the other. The Government

were unbending in their attitude and in their unrepentent mood, they were thrusting a scheme of Reforms which were pronounced to be “unsatisfactory, inadequate and disappointing” by the National Congress and other public bodies to herald which the Prince of Wales was about to be landed in India. Our people therefore, were then considering their attitude, firstly, about the political Reforms, and secondly, the visit of His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, both of which had been impending.

In both of these, Gopalakrishna ranged himself on the side of an upright nationalism and he was virtually responsible for the Non-cooperation Resolution against the Montague-Chelmsford Reforms and also for the Boycott of the Prince’s visit in that Andhra Conference, which was perhaps the first of the kind in India. His argument in favour of the latter was characteristically his own and deserves mention. He told his audience that the Nation was in mourning over the death of the Punjab martyrs, and in its *polluted* condition, was not in a mood to receive friends or relatives. It was a happy idea, elevating politics from the level of street-squabble to the dignity of our home-life at the same time both expressive of a determined protest against our rulers and eschewing all trace of hatred against them.

Gopalakrishna was equally responsible for a Resolution to appoint a Committee of eminent educationists, with himself as convener to examine our

ancient and traditional educational ideals and methods and to draft a scheme of Education on our traditional lines. He himself had been revolving the Goshti idea in his mind at this time; and after leaving the Conference, he pursued the idea with the result that he prepared the draft of a scheme which is perhaps the greatest of his contributions to the Andhra people; and it was only to give an outer expression to these ideals that he eventually started the Vidya Peetha Goshti at Chirala-Perala.

This is the formal and prosaic part of the story of the starting of the Goshti. But there is a more interesting and human part behind it, which culminated in its emergence.

For, immediately after leaving Masulipatam, Gopalakrishna was faced with a quest for a 'reference in space', i.e. for a place to settle down and live. And he pitched upon Chirala for the purpose as it satisfied the double object of serving his grand educational ideal, which had now completely possessed his mind, and of being situated in a beauteous and healthy locality, bordering the sea. In fact, he resorted to Chirala for the treatment of his wife, who was at that time keeping indifferent health. His original idea was to select and acquire a spot on the sea-shore itself, near the *Vadarevu*, three miles from Chirala, for purpose of his University. But it was distant from the town; there was no road at that time connecting the two; and for several other reasons he thought that he might first have a place nearer the town and nearer civilization, at the same

time being sufficiently removed from its evils. In making his choice, he must have been guided by the scene of his Master Ananda Coomaraswamy's 'Heavenly Home of Peace' at Britford near Salisbury, where he stayed for sometime. He therefore chose a spot a mile from Chirala town; and with that as the base of his operations he hoped ultimately to realise his grander dream nearer the sea at some future time. This grander dream, however, never came about; though even as late as January 1927, he was telling his friends from astrological calculations, that he would be responsible for the building of a Brahma's Temple on the Vadarevu sea-shore and with that as nucleus, that he would found his grand Brahminical Religion.

Having chosen the place, Gopalakrishna approached the Divisional Magistrate of Ongole for a grant of land. The Magistrate, who was a highly cultured gentleman, sympathised with Gopalakrishna's aspirations and encouraged him to get together a few others and form an educational association and register it under the Indian Societies Act when he would be able to consider the grant. Gopalakrishna took up the idea, formed the Sreemat Andhra Vidya Peetha Geshti (or the Andhra Cultural Comraderie) and registered it on the 22nd June 1920, and in due course, got a grant of 58 acres of land for the society. He received formal orders of the grant and a day or two later, he had to translate a speech of Mahatma Gandhi at Bezwada, for doing which the Government immediately, i.e. within four days of passing the original orders, sent another

whereby Gopalakrishna was prevented from entering the land "until further orders".

The workings of his mind at this sudden, un-called for, unexpected and altogether unnecessary prohibition order may easily be imagined. For here was a young man, full of life, varied in experience, aspirant after a future, who, from his childhood, through a chronic and deep-seated unrest, had been driven from pillar to post and again from post to pillar, now from school to a Revenue Clerk's job, from the job to the College, from the College to a teacher's profession, from that to England on an adventurous scheme of study, thence to Government Professorial service and the National College, whence finally to the sands of Chirala, where at last he longed for peace, contentment and silent educational work, unconnected with the fortunes either of the Government or of the people. And he was now not to enter the very land on which he had been dotting, and upon which he staked his entire future life!

He felt now like an enraged and infuriated lion whose prey had been snatched off from its very mouth, or better still, as an outraged lover, whose beloved had been cut off from him just on the eve of consummation. The part played by him in this mood in the Chirala-Perala campaign is a matter of history; but so far as the Goshti is concerned, in lieu of the forbidden ground, he applied for and got the present Ramnagar land of about 18 acres, from five persons of Perala, with whom he was at this time very popular. At that place, he gathered three or

four young men some of whom followed him from the Jateeya Kalasala, settled down, collected a little money, and began to formulate a scheme of work which was chiefly educational and cultural. They wanted to start a Press, called the Satyanarayana Press, and purchased a machine; he declared himself the Editor and Publisher of two weekly papers entitled the 'Sadhana', one in English and one in Telugu; and one of the members actually published a national calendar or *Panchangam*. The scheme of work which was rapidly drawn up was being assimilated by the Goshti members for the starting of a school at an early date; and the higher courses of study were being fully thrashed out by Gopalakrishna himself. Thus everything was almost ready when the Non-cooperation wave of Indian politics swept over the land and the Goshti was all but lost in its storms, and it was not till Gopalakrishna's return from exile, both Governmental and Congressional, towards the middle of 1925 that the Goshti once more revived its existence even in name.

Before going to trace the subsequent stages in the chequered history of the Goshti, it is better to refer briefly to the Goshti scheme and plan, as conceived by Gopalakrishna.

The *constitutional* aspect of the Goshti is existing in the form of certain rules and regulations of the Society as submitted to the Registrar according to the requirements of the Act. And a brief resume of the more important sections of the same is as follows:

The name of the Association shall be 'Sreemat Andhra Vidya Peetha Goshti', or simply the 'Goshti'. Its objects shall be (i) to provide for the education of our children on traditional lines by the creation of a cultural centre in Andhradesa in the form of a "Vidyapeetham" or University. (ii) For the spread of culture, to create in every district in Andhra as many of such Ashrams as possible, affiliated to the central Vidya Peetham. (iii) To take all such steps as would conduce to the spread of healthy education and inspired (righteous) living among the people of Andhradesa.

In an explanatory statement, he was suggesting that he meant to realise through the Goshti the following among other objects. (1) To provide for a centre in the Andhradesa, where the youths of the country could gather in a spirit of cultural comradeship; (2) The elimination of money from the governance of our institutions shall be a cardinal creed of Ramnagar.

Elsewhere he defined the objects of the Goshti in the following words. The Goshti "aims, amongst others, at organising Andhra life to come in line with the Great National movement that is afoot in the country. A clear and correct enunciation of National Idealism is to precede the actual establishment, under its auspices, of a genuine Vidyapeetham (University) which shall present a constant critique of the movement of Andhra life and thought.



“The need of the hour, however, is a rigorous valuation of alien ideas and forms of life that are gathering thick around us. And unless a co-ordination of our experience, a synthesis of all our activities and a correct line of conduct that steers clear of all superstition and unreason are laid down and a living ideal with all modern form and movement facilitated, we stand the risk of the abiding individuality of our race deteriorating and our capacity for self-expression disappearing. A constant examination of our current social, religious and economic life is to be undertaken and guided to move in consonance with our traditional modes of self-adjustment.

“To afford facilities for the nascent Andhra genius and talent to give its fullest love and sacrifice to the Nation is yet another desideratum.”

There shall be three classes of members: (i) the Pandits or ‘Life members’ who serve the institution for at least ten years; (ii) the Patrons; and (iii) the students or *Sadhakas*. Subsequently, however, he wrote that “we shall have only participants and no patrons”.

The management shall vest in (a) a Managing Board and (b) the Vicharanakarta or Secretary. The Secretary shall also be the Chairman of the Managing Committee and shall administer all the affairs of the Goshti. The Managing Committee shall be elected once a year; the Secretary shall hold office for five years, being eligible for re-election.

The *Vidya Peetham* or University shall be the principal working department of the Goshti. The Peetham shall have a President *unanimously* elected by the Goshti members. If there is none so elected i.e. unanimously, the place shall be kept vacant. He shall hold office for six years, being re-eligible for election.

Local Ashrams or Colleges affiliated to the University shall be managed by local managing committees, which shall be entitled to send a representative each to the central Managing Board.

The members of the Goshti shall be free to follow their independent avocations in life not detrimental to the welfare of the Goshti; and the Goshti shall not in any way interfere with such earnings of its members. (One other idea which he left in respect of the Goshti and its members is that every member of the Goshti shall adopt the Goshti as an additional member of his family and give to its share a proportionate part of his income).

The Goshti shall meet at least twice a year; and its proceedings shall be published annually.

II. The *Constructional* part of the scheme was to provide for, among others, the following:—

For an Ashramam the following five are most important: (1) Temple (School); (2) Press; (3) Guest-house or Chatram; (4) Lodgings or Grama-kantham and (5) Land for cultivation.

The land required shall be about 132 acres as follows:

(a) For habitation:—

1. Temple (with a Tank, School and Library attached)	5 acres
2. Office and Printing Press	2 „
3. Guest-house	5 „
4. Habitation for 10 families	20 „
	<hr/>
Total	32 „

(b) For cultivation:—

At least	100 „
	<hr/>

Total 132 acres.

The whole to cost at Rs. 100 per acre about Rs. 15000 approximately; and the Press, preliminary expenses and buildings to cost another Rs. 15,000. Total estimated cost Rs. 30,000.

“Everybody shall get his initial outlay for expenses;”

A few general directions are appended as follows:

- “1. Settle the locality to be acquired.
2. Try to obtain the minimum outlay by all sorts of honourable means.
3. Settle down and
4. Start work.”

III The *cultural* or educational part of the Goshti is perhaps the greatest contribution of Gopalakrishna to the solution of Andhra, nay Indian, thought and life; and it is available in Telugu in the only manuscript copy which he left, and deals with the fundamental aspects of our educational ideals, under the three heads of Elementary, Secondary and Collegiate. The scheme is of the highest importance to our educational experts and bears translation and popularisation into every one of the Indian languages.\*

The later story of the Goshti is briefly told. After its premature suspension in 1921, when it also gave a welcome Reception to Mahatma Gandhi and presented him with a beautiful address in Telugu, written on palm leaf and besmeared with turmeric paste, the Goshti had a nominal revival in 1923. Gopalakrishna, after his return from jail, started a Joint Stock Company for the publication of some papers and books; and he tacked on the Goshti as the main sanction for the Samity or the Publishing House.

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\*Published separately in Telugu.

The Samity or Sreemath Andhra Sodara Samity as it was called, was to vend its wares for the benefit of the Goshti; and a portion of its profits was also to go to the Goshti Exchequer. But the Samity itself, owing to the weathers of the political storm, had to content itself with an inglorious career and ultimately it was wound up in 1927, without its fruits being ever offered to the Goshti and the Goshti could continue its sleep undisturbed.

In November 1924, on his rearrival at Ramnagar, he had a vague sort of idea of reviving the Goshti; and the following are a few extracts from his subsequent correspondence relative to the Goshti-idea. "The foundation ceremony of the two Temples (Siva and Vislnu).....has been fixed for the 5th of March (latterly changed to 7th). Thus will our Vidya Peetha Goshti come into existence.....Ours is not an institution which is to save or Swarajise a Nation. Nor is it the offspring of the Gandhian Era and Ethic or Theology. It has been existing since pre-Gandhian times though so far in my dreams and the sands of Ramnagar. It is only now that I am vouchsafed freedom to devote myself to it. And I am determined to do it at all costs and even with no cost. And you will notice mine is too curious a method for the modern to feel comfortable at the thing. Fancy idols are to be the first denizens of the village and the first members of the Goshti! But so they are who-so-ever notwithstanding, where I am concerned.....Idol is the concretised ideal." (Letter to G.V.S. dated 19—2—1925).

“Why not we spend a few days of every month together in a conference of comparative experience? Or why not, every week-end? Every Saturday and Sunday at Ramnagar! A capital proposal and a salutary one, what do you say to that? It would at least be Pickwickian, if not Aristotelian. We shall have a few more. They must be quite mobile and need not be very rich but in their tastes. We shall have only participants and no patrons. We shall even record the transactions of this group of go-aheads. And that is Goshti right enough!..... Workers who have made up their minds to be so despite disabilities, dearths and despondencies make capital company during such gatherings.....”  
(*Ibid* dated 13—4—1925).

Writing to his Guru, Dr. Ananda Coomaraswamy in January 1925: “Sreemat Andhra Vidya Peetha Goshti (something like the Aristotelian Society) has been my ambition.....Leaving the Lord, I am yet the only inhabitant of the village..... Some day, I hope to gather in a few more wise souls into my Goshti, whose *Peetham* I propose to establish there some day”.

“For Goshti, the nearest Sunday this side or that to Full Moon is the day every month. Of course we meet only once a month. I don’t propose more than five members to start with.....The type of a member should be one as would

- i. Reach or have reached certain levels in thought and emotion;

ii. Pledge or have pledged one's self to serve a commensurate ideal in life;

iii. Be free to dispose of one's self about in life.....

We shall have no cynics..... Earnest youngmen make capital members of the Goshti. Fat-pursed and high-browed are to be cautiously admitted". (Letter to G.V. S. dated 21—6—25).

"I have always felt the Goshti should spin itself round the Temple. Religion was its motif. The Goshti Library was conceived to be a part of the Temple. It was never a nationalistic venture, as such, though, if it could have lived, it would have been of much national service. The species of culture that was to fill it and was to be dynamic of response and growth was intended to be what is now generally called 'Hindu' culture. Nationalistic colour tends to eliminate the religious motif, which is vital for every genuine Goshti. 'H.S.' and such other people may easily drag it into the 'Library Movement', or the 'educational' or any philanthropic one..... The Goshti was never intended to "serve a public purpose" in the current, common, democratic sense of the term..... Doers of public good, as such, are not of much consequence for it or for any abiding cultural Goshti".

The following circular, with a draft of the Goshti object and methods in Telugu, was dictated by Gopalakrishna on 8—5—1927. and was intended for circulation among two dozen likely persons.

“The Goshti Day is intended as a day of dissociation from current actions, when we try to think about our life and examine its dispositions, current and coming, and hit upon a fundamental formula and shape our lives accordingly.

“To form a private Goshti to help each other and develop a certain relationship which rises above caste and above everything else in pursuit of Reality, meeting once a month, at Ramnagar.

“To try to evolve, on the whole, a new order of Life or Religion, absolutely unostentatiously and to immediately practise (undertake) living up to it.

“That is to say, every meeting must account for realities in our life. We may enlighten each other, and publish proceedings but without any names.

“Something like a free-masonry, or the Aristotelian Society.—Genuine comradeship and genuine life—not many members; and no question of votes, elections or democracy. Only try to be and adopt the unanimous.

“Think a thousand times before you give your consent”.

The objects and methods of the “Brahmana Goshti”—which was the name evolved for his new conception—as dictated by him in the original Telugu form were as follows:



అర్థా,

ఈ క్రింద నుదహరింపబడు లక్ష్య లక్షణములతో మేము బ్రాహ్మణ గోష్ఠినొక దాని నేర్పరుపఁదలచి కొన్నాము. తామి గోష్ఠియందొకరై జీవయాత్ర సాధించగల బ్రాహ్మణోత్తములని యెఱింగి తమరిందు సభ్యులు కావలెనని కోరుచు తమకీ విన్నపము సంపుకొన సాహసించుచున్నాము. తమ యంగీకారమును దెలుప వేడుకొనుచున్నాము.

గోష్ఠీ సమావేశము శ్రీరామనగరున ప్రతి నెలయు పూర్తి మకు సామీప్యముననుండు భానువారమున జరుగును. ఆరోజు ఉదయమునకు విచ్చేసి యా సభ్యులలో నెవరైన యొక్కరి ఆతిథ్యము నారోజున కంతకును అంగీకరించి ఆరోజంతయు గోష్ఠీ విషయములు చర్చించుచు మరునాటికి తమ తావులకు వెళ్ళునట్లు యేర్పాటు. తమ యంగీకారము తెలిపిన వెంటనే మొదటి సమావేశ వివరములు తమ కంపుకొనెదము.

లక్ష్య, లక్షణములు:—

“తత్వమసి”, “అహంబ్రహ్మస్మి”, “సర్వంఖల్విదంబ్రహ్మ”, యిత్యాది అద్వైత ప్రతిపాదికములగు శృతులు మాత్రము పరమార్థములుగను ధర్మ నిర్ణయాదులయందు సహితము పరమ ప్రమాణములుగను యంగీకరించుటయు, నమ్ముటయు తన్నియ మితములగు మార్గముల ననుసరించియే వ్యావహారిక, పారమార్థిక వ్యవస్థల నన్నింటి యందును జీవయాత్రను నడిపింప, సాధింప కృత నిశ్చయై యుండుట.

౨. బ్రహ్మ జ్ఞానాన్వేషణము, బ్రహ్మ పదార్థ సాధనము, జీవితమందు సర్వకాల సర్వావస్థలయందు ప్రధాన లక్ష్యముగా నంగీకరించి సమస్తమైన వృత్తులను యిందు సమన్వయముచేసి, నడుచుకొనువారగుచు బ్రాహ్మణ సంజ్ఞను స్వీకరించి, అట్టి దీక్షను గ్రహించి జీవయాత్రను జేయుట.

లక్షణములు :—

ఈ పై నుదహరింపబడిన లక్ష్యము నంగీకరించి బ్రాహ్మణ దీక్షను బూనిన బ్రాహ్మణులు పదిమందికి తక్కువ లేకుండా నొక గోష్ఠి నేర్పరుచుకొనుచు తమ తమ జీవితములు తద్ధర్మానుష్ఠానమున జరిగించుకొనుట.

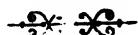
౨. ఈ లక్ష్య లక్షణములను యథాశక్తి సోదర ప్రజలకు విన్నవించుచు యీ బ్రాహ్మణ ధర్మమును లేక మతమును వారి యందు వ్యాప్తి చేయుచుండుట.

The draft was to be completed, printed and circulated privately among a number of friends, but he was too ill at the time and almost immediately came a suspension order as below :

“Regarding our Goshti. I want to alter the letter form. I simply want to say that I wish to present the principles of a new social order in the form of a *Smriti* called the *Brahmana smriti* and request those gentlemen to be present. That we will also form a Goshti composing of those who agree. I shall write the letter later. No improvement yet in health”.

It will thus be observed that, in the course of Gopalakrishna's life-time, the Goshti had undergone a radical transformation in thought as well as in conception in his mind; and from the nature of an educational colony or *Vidya Peetham*, it grew into a Brahmana Goshti or Comraderie of Seekers. The educational motif has completely merged itself into

the religious; and the external programmes of a school, press, papers, library, members, patrons, elections, congresses and what not, have all resolved themselves into a simplified formula, an "One word" as he used to call it, viz. the Temple, which, to him, became the panacea of all ills, and to which he tenaciously clung till the end,—though, it is sad to reflect that, owing to a cruel conspiracy of time and circumstance, nothing material turned up while he was alive, or even after his death till this day.



## CHAPTER VI.

## Chirala—Perala: Its Causes.

With the story of the Goshti being told, an important epoch in Gopalakrishna's life has been reached, and it is in a different light that we view him hereafter. In the past, he was a mere Sadhaka,—that is, a seeker, endeavouring to search, to see, to divine, to know. But hereafter the process is *to do*. In the past, he was himself the led, if not the groping; and his brilliance was the brilliance of a genius. Hereafter he was to shine as a leader of his men, of his people. From one point of view, indeed it is true that even in this period of vigorous action there was the continuation of doubt, of reasoning and of search; but it has now receded to the innermost crevices of his being, the most secret chambers of his soul, and what he was outwardly was a mass of dynamic action, a pyramid of burning flames. The old process of building up and construction have ceased and he now became the devouring, destroying power. What was but potential in him so far, has now assumed a kinetic form; and the good, loving and almost placid, though buoyant Siva (God of Good) has now become the stern, determined and terrible, though no less amiable Rudra (the God of Destruction), bent upon, as he hoped, burning away the alien rule under the fires of his 'Third Eye'.

It was a great change—from Education to Politics; and it has been sometimes urged that Gopalakrishna committed an awful blunder in thus sur-

rendering his life-mission immaturely to a political whirl-wind. There is perhaps much truth in the view and Gopalakrishna himself partially confessed to his error later on. For had he steadily pursued his Goshti ideals, possibly he would have conserved his own vital energy; and could have also trained up a young band of associates imbued with a new spirit, vision and thought for fulfilling the new work of the Renaissance in Andhra. But in justification of the step that he took, it may also perhaps be urged that Gopalakrishna earned his chief reputation as leader of the Chirala campaign and, what is more, he had then the faith in him, which *subsequent* events had belied, viz. that Mahatmaji was an *Avatar*, incarnated for purposes of India's Freedom and the world's *Mukti*. This view about Gandhiji was present in Gopalakrishna's mind throughout the three or four years of his active political life; and it was not before it was too late that he realised that Gandhiji was, after all, not a "God" (*Purushottama*), but a "man", albeit the highest among our men (*Uttamapurusha*); and the mistake cost him his life.

In fairness to Gopalakrishna's great intellect, however, it must be remembered that though he proclaimed Gandhiji an *Avatar*, yet in his heart of hearts he had his own doubts in the matter and even at the time of his actual joining the Gandhian ranks, he was wavering whether Gandhiji had indeed possessed all the "nine Rasas". the nine "qualities" of divinity, and whether he would exhibit the three qualities of "Raudra, Bhayanaka, and

Bhibhatsa" which were awaiting "to be disclosed in God's ward-robe"; and he even told Gandhiji of his fears on one occasion. But for the time being, he threw away all such doubts to the winds, and in his "utter self-surrender", he prostrated himself before the Gandhian politics, in the belief and hope that Gandhiji would become a God one day!

How different this was from what the great Bhrigu Maha Rishi did before he advised the *Munis* of the Saraswathi area in the matter of choosing "the Chancellor of Gods"! For we read in the Bhagavatham that they fell into dispute as to who amongst the Trinity of Brahma, Vishnu and Ishvara was the highest, and they sent Bhrigu on a testing mission. Bhrigu first went to Brahma, and found him wanting; next he went to Rudra and found him worse; and he went to Vishnu last and kicked him on his breast! Whereupon the noble Lord got down His bed of roses; bowed to the feet of the Tapasvi; begged forgiveness for not anticipating his arrival; and told the Muni that He and His were all blessed for the touch of his (Muni's) feet on his breast! The Muni felt quite rejoiced at his heart; came back to the hermitage; related his experience to his colleagues; and they unanimously resolved upon worshipping none else but the Vishnu as the supreme God-head and in the end attained to a place in *Vaikuntham* themselves!

Such is the way of our wisemen, of our *Munis*; but Gopalakrishna, in this one instance at least built his future upon his "hopes"; and it is no wonder

if he discovered himself a complete wreck at the end of his political career and completely disillusioned.

Chirala—Perala constitutes the greatest outer achievement in Gopalakrishna's life, nay, one of the most heroic incidents of the Non-cooperation movement in India; but a story of the struggle still remains to be written. For obvious reasons it is not intended to attempt a detailed narrative of that story here; but only the barest outlines of the main causes and effects of Chirala, which throw light on the general work and character of Gopalakrishna, will be noticed in this and the succeeding chapters.

Briefly, Chirala—Perala was a struggle against the imposition of a Municipality by the Government, over the people of those villages.

It has been argued by some people as to why so much of his talent, energy and power should be wasted over so trivial a matter as the Chirala Municipality; but those critics just forgot that the true function of all Art, (just like Valmiki's taking up a slender grass—Kusa—and "translating" it into a mighty effort) is, unlike in the Gandhian dictum, not to see the universal in the wide ocean or in the vast and starry vault, but to read infinitude in finitude, the omniscient in the minutest nescience, the macrocosm in the microcosm—to realise the divine in the faintest curve of a picture, in the tenderest touch of a poem, the most delicate shade of a flower, in the finest tune of a song. The brush, the pen, the petal and the tune—these are the great

weapons of our great artists all the world over; and though the mass, indeed, has sometimes its hugeness, massivity, it rarely inspires as a work of art. And the artist that Gopalakrishna was, it is no wonder that he played his part in the Cheerala sands.

The chief inner causes which led to the Chirala-Perala struggle—the external causes are hardly worth noticing here—may be briefly summed up.

First and foremost it was a struggle of the village versus the Town. It may appear as strange to the modernised mind, but the fact is there, nevertheless.

To understand this view-point, it is necessary to remember that India, unlike the Western countries, is mainly a rural country, and our entire life and administration is based on the structure of the primary village-unit. And this fact, viz. of our village constituting a solid brick, a vital unit, in the higher structure of the Indian constitution, gives us the clue at once to the secret of our organisation in this vast land of 350 million souls, of different races, religions, castes, communities, languages etc., and it also accounts for the great success with which our life and administration have been carried on from the earliest times almost till the present day. Our main stream of life was thus always of a rural type; it was not even partially urbanised; though we had our towns and cities, indeed, they were for special purposes only, such as regal or military: and the village throughout has been the centre of our life and



administration. So much so that 'urbanisation', which is the life-breath of western constitutions, has come to mean to our people the death-knell of their very existence.

But the British Government, ever since their coming into India, whether due to their own knowledge of Urban conditions 'at Home' (and a consequent ignorance of the realities in this land), or out of a desire to crush the strong-holds of our life for their own imperialist ends, have done everything in their power to destroy our village-systems and to replace them by 'municipal corporations' based more or less on their own 'local bodies' in England. And as recently as 1927, so eminent an Englishman as the Earl of Ronaldshay (now the Marquis of Zetland) declared that "Even the Local self-government in India is based on English, not Indian models". It was an age-long process; and the British Government have been at it ever since they set foot on the Indian soil. And the destruction of our village-life, coupled with an attempt more pronounced of late, to set up Urban Boards and Municipalities in our bigger villages and towns,—this constitutes the main policy of the British administration during the two centuries of their rule in India.

The Municipality, with its limited powers and begging methods, inert constitution and internecine warfare, declared Gopalakrishna, was a hybrid born out of the unholy alliance of the Abrahmana and the Angleya, i.e. the Non-Brahmin and the English in the Madras Presidency; and it is no wonder that, in

his attempt to restart this Nation on its great path of Swadharma and Swaraj, he began with an effort to resist the impact of British political culture on our vital village-life, and, in his own manner, to found the traditions of a new village, by instituting the Ramnagar near Chirala.

But Gopalakrishna's revolt in Chirala-Perala was not merely a severe disapproval of Urban life; it was more directly a deadly protest against the mode of British Government. In fact, left to himself, in a free country, and under Swaraj, it is doubtful if Gopalakrishna would not have made his place a city—the capital, perhaps, of an Imperial Andhra race; for, by nature, he was no less an imperialist in his outlook than the Kaiser or the late Lord Curzon or the Italian Mussolini. But, under the conditions of slavery obtaining in the country, his war against the Chirala Municipality was conceived as a battle-royal, offered in God's Cause, by the most doughty of His champions, against the British bureaucracy that rules and dominates this land.

It may be recalled here that, at this time, the Congress politics had assumed a definitely active and critical turn and the country was clearly ranged in a Non-violent Non-cooperation fight with the British Government. Reference has already been made to the Punjab massacres, Montagu Reforms and the Mahanandi Conference. The Calcutta Special Congress which met in September 1920, under the Presidency of Lala Lajapati Rai, accepted a Resolution of Non-cooperation with the existing Go-

vernment, and Gopalakrishna, it would appear, had seconded that Resolution at Calcutta. The Nagpur Congress which met in December 1920 reaffirmed the Non-cooperation Resolution and went a step further and laid down a programme for “establishing Swaraj in India *within the year of Grace 1921*” (italics not ours); and when we remember that this programme was inspired and ushered in by one whom he (Gopalakrishna) declared at this time a “seer, a creator, a leader of mankind,.....so acknowledged or about to be acknowledged”, it will be realised as to how he could not help throwing himself head-long into the movement.

This last,—“so acknowledged *or about to be acknowledged*” as such, i.e. as an Avatar, referring to Gandhiji gives us the clue at once to the secret of Gopalakrishna’s head-long rush towards his Chirala precipice. His assertions of the Avatarhood of Mahatmaji, however, have now assumed a definitely pronounced and aggressive turn; and from a thousand and one platforms he proclaimed to one and all that Gandhiji was the *Mantra-Drashta*, i.e. Seer of Reality and *Jagat-Srashta* or creator of the world. Gandhiji thus became to him not merely a *Mahatma*, i.e. a high-souled man; but he was a Maha Rshi or Saint and ‘Guru’, *Paramatma*, the world-Teacher. “Gandhi Maha Rshi, our Guru, to be Purushottama (the Ideal Man who is God) must be capable of *Navarasa-spurthi* (must comprehend the nine varieties of Rasa—aethos) as Sree Ramachandra was. ....God in His fulness must find their fullest consummation in the eventual evolution of my Guru’s

character and in our utter self-surrender, we believe in it" (His Trial statement). How this "belief" had gradually faded away and how, in the end, Gopalakrishna found that Gandhiji was only an "Uttama Purusha", i.e. a great man, and not "Purushotama", i.e. an Ideal Man or God, are matters of a later story; suffice it, therefore, to say that Gopalakrishna had felt and believed at this time that, under the Gandhian aegis, a divine dispensation was awaiting India, and that ere long, she was to be on her way to her 'final liberation'; and he, therefore, conducted his campaign at Chirala, as a battle-royal, worthy not only of Britain's steel, but even of India's cause.

Thirdly, Chirala was a social war against the neo-"Non-Brahmanism" in India.

A recent writer remarked that in his Chirala movement, Gopalakrishna fought not so much against the British Government, as against the so-called Non-Brahmana movement which, just at this time, was getting in full swing in this part of the country. The criticism is a bit over done, but it has got its own truth.

To evaluate this social factor, it is necessary to go into our social conditions at this time in the country. We have already referred to the Non-Brahmin movement, engineered by the Government, to divide the people and rule. In North India, it is the case of the Hindu versus the Muhammadan: in the South, it is the Brahmin—Non-Brahmin split.

Brahmins and 'Non-Brahmins' have been existing in India since immemorial times; but the term 'Non-Brahmin' itself is a new creation. The latter is supposed to consist of about 97% of the population of India, and comprise several castes, creeds, religions and languages, and is a heterogeneous mass, as varied as the Indian Society itself, less, of course, the 3% of the Brahmin minority, including, from the view-point of the 'Non-Brahmana' protagonists, both the Muslim and the Christian sections alike.

The Brahmins who constitute the more advanced and cultured section of the country, by virtue of their own talent and general position in society were the first to take advantage of the British connection; and in their fallen and degraded condition, they have been the first to avail themselves of the 'blessings' of British education, and thereby have been able to occupy a majority of the clerical and official posts which are open to Indians under the Crown. In their instinct for self-preservation, which is germane to all minor religious communities all the world over, these Brahmins, during the last few centuries, have been not only following a largely selfish policy, but, under the shadow of that Tamasic darkness which has immersed the whole land, they have let their own fountain-springs of knowledge run dry and allowed their fellow-men to wither in ignorance. True knowledge thus has become extinct in the country, and the most foolish and unmeaning superstitions fill the land now,

which was once the Light and Glory of the world. And the entire life in India has reduced itself to a “ritual without Religion”; and, as Gopalakrishna himself was saying, “the Race of Brahmins has almost become extinct in India”, giving place to an elite steeped in selfishness and slavery, and a mass buried in ignorance and superstition. The result is unspeakable suffering, miserable death,—the flood of Styx itself, as it were, let loose over the land.

The Non-Brahmins have of course their own grievances, most legitimate in many cases. Thus they are denied access to the holy shrines; many cannot even touch the sacred Book, the Veda; they are not allowed—by birth—to learn or practise the more subtle mysteries of our culture; and they bear with them—let alone its causes—the mark of inferiority in social rank, *due mainly to birth*. It is futile to guess the causes that led to this inferiority complex for those who are other than Brahmin-born; but the fact is there now and vitiates the whole system. It sets brother against brother; community against community; and in some cases, the division is carried on to the point of non-dining, non-marrying, non-touching, non-approaching, and even non-seeing between man and man. A man thus cannot see a fellow-man, lest he should get polluted. And all the pollution, mark, is due to birth! One man is *born* a Brahmin; another is *born* a Chandala, ie. a sinner. As it is now—whatever its original import—it has become mostly a meaningless superstition—the out-growth of much different and long-past ages.

The Non-Brahmin movement first arose out of these conditions, partly as a protest against the Brahmins who have said and done many harsh things against the 'Non-Brahmins', and partly as an engineered move of the bureaucracy in South India, to serve their own selfish ends. And in the year of Christian Grace 1920, at a time when the whole country was throwing itself on the side of Mahatma Gandhi and the Congress Non-cooperation movement, the so-called 'Justice' party which was the mouth-piece of the Madras 'Non-Brahmana' activity ranged itself wholly on the side of the British Government and fully cooperated with them in their repressive and oppressive policy. As the Congressmen boycotted the Legislatures, it was easy for a handful of these 'Justicites' to get themselves elected to their seats, with personal patronage and assistance given by the then Governor—whose policy was openly repudiated five or six years later by the then Presiding Governor at Fort St. George—the rule of the 'Justice Party' began in this Presidency in 1921, i.e. just at the time when the Non-cooperation wave was flooding the country.

The Portfolio of 'Municipalities and Local Boards' was then entrusted to the charge of one of the fore-most leaders of the 'Justice' party, the late lamented Rajah of Panagal, who became the first Prime Minister of the Montagu dispensation in the Madras Legislative Council, and who presided over the Local Self-government department also.

The Rajah Saheb who died shortly after Gopalakrishna, was a man of remarkable parts. He had a

brilliant academic career; and like Gopalakrishna, was also an M.A. He was an ardent lover of Sanskrit studies; and was devotedly attached to the Indian systems of medicine; endowed several schools and Universities with scholarships for the prosecution of studies in Indian Philosophy. In the political field the Rajah showed to the South Indian world remarkable powers of statesmanship and constructive ability; and was reputed to possess an unimpeachable character—though he is sometimes dubbed as a bit unscrupulous in method—and was a remarkably strong man, undoubtedly, the greatest leader that the Non-Brahmin movement has yet produced and was a fighter to the core. Truly, he was a foeman worthy of Gopalakrishna's steel.

Thus in ranging himself on the side of Chirala against the Government, Gopalakrishna—a Brahmin—had directly exposed himself to the wrath of the great Non-Brahmin leader; and it was a battle-royal that was waged between the two, for it was not merely two men at war: it was a whole Brahmanical Philosophy and culture, aided by the Congress political struggle to some extent, that pitted itself against a so-called 'Non-Brahmana' conglomeration, aided by the power and influence of the Government. And it was a sight for the Gods to see. Both fought bravely and nobly, and neither hit below the belt. The Brahmin Gopalakrishna invoked divine aid—in his famous Ramasandu, for his help; the Non-Brahmin Panagal sought the bayonet and brute-force for his assistance. Panagal came to Chirala but "not a mouse would



stir"—not a soul would go and hearken to his advice; while 16,000 of them, men, women and children were flocking to the gates of Gopalakrishna, even deserting their hearths and homes. Gopalakrishna won for the time being; but eventually the tide turned against him and Panagal scored it off. The 'Municipality' still rules in Chirala today; but perhaps it is not much better than a Ghost of what it ought to be; while Gopalakrishna, whose "obituary has been announced" by the Rajah Saheb of Panagal himself, is still the surviving spirit, though triumphant only in death!

But, when all is said, it is very much doubtful if Gopalakrishna would still have actively associated himself on the side of politics in 1921, before he had practically laid out his plans if something intimately connected with his own life and work had not occurred in this behalf. And this personal circumstance perhaps explains the otherwise inexplicable fact as to why he should run at a break-neck speed in the Gandhian Non-cooperation movement.

For, we have seen that Gopalakrishna, after his departure from Masulipatam, was in need of a "reference in space"; and through the good graces of the Divisional Officer a plot of 58 acres of land, adjoining Perala village was sanctioned to him and almost immediately with-held. What actually transpired in the archives of the government is a matter for conjecture; but the indisputable fact is there that he was refused the right to enter the very pre-

cincts of the spot which he was doting over for years, which was actually given to him, to which he thought he was really wedded, so that he might pursue his own mission in life.

His political philosophy we have already said, looked upon the country or the earth not as father or mother, but as wife; and when the Government gave him a rude shock by preventing him from "meeting his mate", i.e. from entering his own dearly doted land, his anger knew no bounds.

This explains as to why Gopalakrishna not only joined the Non-cooperation movement, but strove passionately against the 'monstrous' system of Government, which had enticed him from his chosen land. It became to him a matter of personal honour—to fight and vindicate his husband-ship over his land! And he would be a poor husband indeed, who wouldn't give up his life for the sake of his beloved!

When that much is said in favour of his action—and he deserves no less—it is difficult to shut from oneself the doubt whether, after all, Gopalakrishna had not prematurely jumped into the political fires. For if he had a little more wary walking about him, and continued and adhered to his own attempts at perfecting his armoury, a tragedy would perchance have been averted! But the glamour of Gandhiji was too much and he felt that the call came for him also; and it should not be said that "he was not ready". And so he joined the Non-

cooperation movement in 1920, hoping to get "Swaraj in one year", or, in the alternative, to die in the attempt. Thus 'Victory or Death' was his motto; and Chirala was the arena for his fight.







## CHAPTER VII.

## Chirala—Perala: Its Preparations:

(The Ramadandu).

My pen refuses to move to portray the glories of the Chirala struggle; but I find I must attempt some, though crude, analysis of the chief preparations, main incidents and final results of the campaign in as brief a space as possible. And in the attempt at delineating the main aspects of a campaign which is easily the most wonderful of recent years, if the reader finds my story to be too dull, too prosaic and matter of fact, the fault is all mine, because I have no pen to depict the fiery poesy of Gopalakrishna's achievement of those soul-stirring times.

We have seen that by the winter of 1920, i.e. after the Calcutta Special Congress, Gopalakrishna had decided that he should throw in his lot with the Gandhian Non-cooperation movement; and he found a small Municipal trouble brewing between the people of Chirala where he was then residing—incidentally Chirala is not his native place—and the Madras Government. The dispute was on for at least a year previously, but Gopalakrishna took no part or lot in the begging and petitioning methods which were being tried for the redress of their grievances. But when he decided to throw in his lot with the political current, he quickly made up his mind not only about the battle he should wage, but

as to the line of action also which he should pursue. And in barely a month or two, while other leaders were busying themselves about meetings, lectures, conferences and other purely demonstrative and educational activities, Gopalakrishna, in his own supremely silent manner, began his preparations, which, it will be found, were not only unique in themselves, but even proved in the long run the most efficacious. And thus by the time of the Nagpur Congress (December 1920), when the Nation had *resolved to begin* its organisation for “establishing swaraj in India”; Gopalakrishna had already forged his weapons and chosen his little spot for his “battle”.

It will be seen that there were two things which he did to begin this “fight to the finish”.

First,—and it is very important to bear in mind—he *prepared himself*, to do or die, i.e. to attain Swaraj for India, perhaps in Chirala, by the help of the Andhras at least, in the year of Christian Grace 1921, and at the end of the year to crown Mahatma Gandhi not only as the new Emperor of India, but as the new God of the world, and himself take his humble place, as a captain in His Corps; *or*, failing that, at least to place his head as a crown at Gandhiji's feet, during that year of trial. Thus he wrote in 1924 to a friend: “when I had first joined the Non-cooperation, I felt I was called upon to die; but now I learn I have to live. This is a terrible prospect especially for a dreamer and particularly in these days.” In other words, he decided to go

the “whole-hog” for Chirala, and through Chirala, to establish Swaraj for India—This was the starting preparation for his struggle.

The significance of this will be apparent when we find that there were thousands of others, distinguished leaders, most eminent countrymen, including some Presidents and Members of our Provincial and even All India Congress Committees who with all their distinguished glory and riches, had not made up their minds to die for Swaraj or return victorious from the struggle. And this indecision and drift was the most marked in our own province, it being everywhere not an inner determination and real resolve to do a thing or die, but the looking out for orders from abroad, an anxious awaiting for what a Mahatma Gandhi would say or do, an almost cowardly clinging to and dependence on leaders, particularly of the North Indian brand.

It was thus a species of self-reliance that prompted Gopalakrishna to his achievement, and what is the same thing, the armoury that he chose for his aid was ‘Divine Help’. And when he had an ‘army’—*albeit* a peace-army—about him for his fight, it became the Divine Militia or God’s Army, his well-known *Rama-Dandu*.

The point is perhaps a bit abstruse and requires amplification. Gandhiji’s Non-cooperation was a non-violent struggle; and neither bombs or aeroplanes nor machine guns or tanks and submarines had



any place in it. And the only path available was that of self-effort and of self-sacrifice. For that, Gopalakrishna said, what arms are more efficacious than the holy *Mantra* of the divine *Ram-Nam* (God's name) and what army but a divine Militia, the Rama Dandu? It is thus that he confessed his faith to a British judge sometime later. "My Lord, Sree Ramachandra has sanctioned the prosecution of 300 millions of my countrymen and His Inspector-General the Lord of Ramadandu, Mahatma Gandhi, awaits to execute it. My incessant prayer is that thus shall it be: "Swasthi Sree Ramarpana masthu. May it be a holy offering unto Him!"

There are two reasons why he chose the Ramadandu in preference to any other type of organisation existing in the country—Boy Scout or Red-Cross, Volunteer Corps or Peace-Army, Service League or Seva-dal.

First, that it has been the traditional method of organising the mass of our men in the land in times of dire need, as at present. In the Andhradesa in particular, during times of war, famine and pestilence, Ramadandu has been a well-known mode of organisation; and the bond of religion in it would easily bind the multi-million mass into one harmony. And as an experiment in mass organisation on our traditional lines, the value of Ramadandu was unique and perhaps unrivalled.

And secondly, from the stand-point of the world's need, what corps more handy than God's own divine Militia?

The position, briefly, is this: Religion is the sole spring of life; or as Mr. Wells put it, "It is to Religion that we owe the desire for some sort of righteousness beyond self-seeking: it is religion, more than anything else has made man disinterested and ready to subordinate self to larger loyalties." It is only the religious-minded minority "who have been and continue to be the salt of the earth". And "only by Religion can the world be saved".

Such being Religion, what is its soul? Its chief thing—its crux? It is not dogma, nor creed, nor ritual nor even select scriptures, however eminent all these, in themselves, be. The prime centre being in the heart of all these, is the spirit of God Himself, of the one Indivisible Being, who divides Himself among His devotees revealing Himself through His sage-saints. God is thus the centre of this universe, whose Light and Truth are the effulgence of His divine Radiance.

But lo! there happened one most wonderful thing, most astounding in recent times, for in the 'industrial age' of the West, the material age or the Kaliyuga as we call it, He (God) has been, through the cleverness of our industrialists, slyly divorced from life and on His Throne now sits the holy Pretender, viz. Money! And it is the spirit of Money, of matter, that rules the world today—with its industrial civilization, monetary standards, economic justice, commercial thought, territorial jealousy

sies, rivalries and wars! All the world's nationalism has thus been largely built upon the economic greed of its peoples, and even the International treaties and the famous League of Nations are nothing better than open or secret cliques and clans of a materialistic humanity from the midst of whom God had been dethroned, and, if existing at all, surviving as a back-number, in a Sunday chapel or in a kitchen-corner in our houses! While Mammon is the Prince, and he walks in majesty!

Such is the world today; and it is the case all the world over, whether in the East or in the West. There are of course good people, sincere souls, both here and there, everywhere in the world. But for the day, at any rate, their voices are still; and against them is ranged a whole array of arms; and everywhere it is the clank of the coin that counts.

And how to face such a world? How to provide for its further and higher growth?

By piling up hordes upon hordes, millions upon millions, Empires over kingdoms, and massacres over all?

The only alternative is to show the divine path—the path of healing where wounds are inflicted on a bleeding, suffering humanity.

And the path of Gopalakrishna's Ramadandu is of the latter category; while healing wounds, it never left any sores behind.

The chief call which it made on man is that of faith and devotion,—of faith in the Divine and devotion to His Cause.

And the army which he raised was not merely a divine army; it was also a devotional one, being based on faith and complete self-surrender, as contrasted with the action—creed or even the Charka cult of this most materialistic world.

Further action,—more greed, increased bleeding, greater wars, worse death.

But a dose of devotion, *Bhakti*, and the world is verily saved!

The Temple, Goshti, Ramadandu and the Brahmna Religion—these four are Gopalakrishna's positive contributions to Andhra Nationalism; and as one which he discussed not only theoretically, but even revealed in practical, working order, it behoves us to know some details of this organisation.

*Ramadandu* is a religious organisation, for "Religion is work of real Life": "Of all the agencies that can fire the soul on to grand and heroic achievement, religion is admittedly the most potent one. The sublimest achievements of man will be found to be due almost solely to religious impulse. The substance of religious impulse which comprehends every conceivable aspect of man's life holds potentialities for effecting every-

thing in man's aspirations. It is the ultimate refuge of the weary spirit wherewith it can realise its destiny". (Volunteer Address).

Secondly, it is the devotional type of the religious (*Bhakti-marga*). For, as intended for the mass, any appeal other than to devotional surrender will, especially in an organisation comprising millions, defeat its own purpose. Too much of intellectualism breeds more leaders than followers; an excess of the ethical touch will make them either cynics or puritans; an over-emphasis on the practical action leads them to the accursed barbarities of modernism; and a super-abundance of the meditative modus will be found useless for the static inertia of the Indian mass, which, like *Kumbhakarna*, is to awake from a long and deep torpor. The *Vanara* or Monkey Army of Sree Ramachandra, therefore, with its unquestioning faith, and unfaltering devotion and surrender, was, according to Gopalakrishna, the only effective cure to the military violence of the West.

Thirdly, Ramadandu is a peace Army and not at all a military subterfuge. It was a 'Red Army' only in name and not at all a counter-part of the Bolshevistik "Reds" in the East.

Fourthly as Gopalakrishna was repeatedly emphasising, Ramadandu was the traditional organisation of the Telugus. "Surely, in Andhra, at least, one cannot think of any other religious organisation than Ramadandu."

Fifthly, addressing itself primarily to over 90% of our people who are Hindus, it aimed at a really religious regeneration of the bulk of our race, in the first instance, leading eventually to a federation or synthesis with the other minority religious communities which would crop up in its wake.

And lastly, it had a wonderful organisation of its own, which may be culled forth from the Telugu scheme of the Ramadandu constitution drawn up by Gopalakrishna himself, and of which the following is a free rendering:

*Ramadandu: Preamble.*

“In this sinful age of *Kali*  
There is no path for *Mukti*  
Other than the worship  
Of Thy blessed Name,  
Oh Sree Ramachandra!”

The institution of Ramadandu has been traditional with the Andhras. The name of Rama has been most dear and sacred to all the Andhra Hindus, irrespective of Saivite and Vaishnavite sectionalism. Therefore Ramadandu has been acceptable to and popular with all our people.

And particularly stressful times of anarchy and of famine have been responsible for the emergence of Ramadandu.

In modern times, when scepticism and agnosticism have grown, poverty has increased, anarchy is spreading and unrest among peoples

has become chronic and deeprooted,—to defeat these conditions, we require such qualities as calmness, wisdom (knowledge), control, courage, valour and character. The modern view is that a “knowledge of enlightened self-interest” shall suffice for this end; but Aryan tradition has been entirely different, and our ancients have repeatedly emphasised on perpetual and devoted service of God as the only path to *Mukti*, (Salvation).

If we preach self-interest to the people and incite them to action, some results, it is true, will accrue, owing to the increased consciousness of the ego thereby. But it is a matter of common experience that, though it is easy to rouse a people, it is very difficult to control them in times of excitement. Sometimes it is even impossible to make them quiet. On the other hand, if we introduce the sacred *Ramnam* and the religious impulse into our work, the selfishness that stands outside will be replaced by Dharma (higher duty) and leaders can then supply both the necessary action (*Prayogam*) and control (*Upa-samharam*) for the great Mass-in-Being. Especially, now-a-days, when men have to act collectively in the world, a God-less effort is fruitless, hurtful, even positively dangerous. While, if we sow the seeds of devotion to God in the minds of the people, they will become wise, self-controlled, courageous, yet calm and quiet, and thus can proceed to ordered action.

Ramadandu has been conceived out of such faith.

More or less with the same objects, there is an organisation called the Scouts, which is a purely Western product. Its objects are well-known, and it is being endorsed by some of our elders and prescribed for our adoption. But if we compare the relative merits of the two, we will clearly see that the Ramadandu is the more suitable for our conditions.

The word 'Scout' means 'a seeker'. Boy Scout can never bloom into the full-blooded warrior that maintains this Empire. His scouting invariably ends in 'Guard-of-honouring' to every tramping God, but our volunteer (Ramadandu) sets himself to scout the whereabouts of his *Swarajya Lakshmi*, even as the old Vanaras had sought after Sita, the Queen of Sree Ramachandra.

"Ramadandu is *Kamadhenu*, the Cow of Plenty. It helps in all our righteous endeavours. In matters spiritual, economic, political, moral, Ramadandu has got the power to intercede and act, for "all works are His" ("It can even work the Local Board elections splendidly".)

#### RULES AND OBJECTS.

*Name:* "*Rama Dandu*". (For promotion of the Hindu-Muslim etc. Unity, it has been agreed that the Muslims might have their "*Mahafuzl Islam*", and both should work conjointly).

*Chief Office:* Ramanagar, Chirala, provisionally.

*Objects:* (1) To pray ever to God and constantly to utter His holy Name.



(2) To dedicate one's all for all good causes which will be accepted as Ramakaryam, i. e. His deeds.

*Membership:* All Andhras who are theists, whether Saivite or Vaishnavite, are eligible for its membership.

*Deeksha & Uniform:* A red garment for underwear, red-shirt, red turban, red caste-mark on the fore-head; beads; *angavastram* (nap-kin); a copper tumbler; hand-stick; two *Chirutalu* or small musical instruments in the hand;—Every member shall wear these while on duty. While travelling, he should also have a kit-bag containing vessels, match-box, and cooking materials. Festive occasions and other days declared as such by the Ramadandu Council shall be observed as days of *Deeksha* (Duty).

*Duties:* 1. To know the leader as the Guru or God and serve (obey) him implicitly.

2. Early morning, after bath, to put on the Dandu uniform and with Ramnam on lips, to do the appointed task ungrudgingly, selflessly and with a pure mind.

3. In times of duty, to be without selfish desire; and placing one's mind at the feet of Sree Ramachandra, with a clear conscience; to be ready for doing any tasks, at whatever sacrifice.

4. On days of duty, to have no distinction of caste, or creed; to know all beings as images of God; and with hearts full of love, to act with an equal mind.

5. To reckon vast assemblages, river and sea-side places, Temples etc. as places of pilgrimage; and knowing them as the manifestations of the Divine, to do worship and service in all such places.

*Dandu Flag*: The most pure, illustrious and powerful *Vajra* or Bone of Dadhichi (who gave away his back-bone for the protection of Dharma) coupled with the figure of Rama's Master-Volunteer, Sree Anjaneya, or some other not inconsistent with the conception of Ramadandu shall be the insignia of the Dandu Flag. And standing round the Flag, the Dandu shall recite verses and songs and conduct *Bhajana* (dances).

*Organisation: Panchayat*: Every village shall form a Ramadandu; and there shall be a Rama-mandiram or Temple for the army. Each (village) unit shall have four officers—the Varma or head; Sarma, the Minister and Priest; Gupta or Treasurer; and Dasu or the servant. The first three shall be elected once a year and the servant by turns every day. The election shall be as far as possible, unanimous; and the servant shall be chosen by the leader. A fifth member shall be elected by lots and the five constitute the Dandu Panchayat. In times of emergency, the leader shall act in anticipation of the

Panchayat sanction. It is open for the Panchayat to censure his action subsequently, but, for the time being, his orders shall be obeyed.

*Taluk Sabha:* Fifty village units or more according to the present administrative division or otherwise, shall form a Taluk Sabha. The Sarma and Varma of every village shall be members of this Sabha. All these Talukdars shall elect a President or Rao. The Rao shall be chosen, as far as possible, unanimously. A President so chosen shall act as dictator; but if elected by a majority, he shall be only a constitutional head, executing the decisions of the Sabha. The Sabha shall also elect by lots, four other members, who with the Rao, shall constitute the Taluk Executive. The Taluk Sabha shall meet twice a year; its Executive once a month. Elections shall be annual.

The Taluk leader shall carry out the Dandu duties with spotless devotion. He shall indicate the Dandu works to every village; solve doubts; pass judgments and assist, along with the Executive, the Panchayats in every way. The Executive shall have a Secretary, chosen by lots, who shall be responsible for the Dandu Funds and accounts. The Sabha shall also have five Reporters and two servants, chosen from among the Talukdars.

*District Sabha:* All the 'Raos' of the district shall comprise a district Sabha, or Board. They shall

elect a head or 'Pantulu' or 'Elder' from among themselves. An elder chosen unanimously shall be a dictator; if elected by a majority, only a constitutional head. The Board shall meet once a month and it shall be their duty to lay down rules for the Army and to see to a successful execution of its functions.

*Provincial Head:* For the several districts of Andhra, there shall be a supreme head, chosen by all the District Elders. He shall be called a "Rama-Das", or "Hanuman", "Jagannath", or "Nayak". The assembly of these Elders shall be the Supreme Council or Dharma Sabha for Ramadandu. It shall elect its own Minister, and choose its own office for head-quarters. Till that time, Ramanagar-Chirala which is the seat of the Andhra Vidya Peetha Goshti, shall serve as one. Two acres of land have been earmarked for Ramadandu, and it shall be open to the Council to choose the spot for the future also. The supreme head, with his Council of Elders, shall administer the Dandu Dharma or Law. Our scriptures have laid it down that the destruction of Evil, protection of the good and establishment of Dharma or Righteous Rule are the duties of every leader. The supreme head shall, therefore, adopt all such methods as shall be conducive to these and, by his good deeds, assist the Andhra Renaissance and promote devotion and faith among the people. He shall carry out the Dandu duties faithfully and with care and attention. He shall promote in the Andhra people, devotion to God, equality of all

living beings, love, piety, selflessness, kindness etc. And such a one alone is entitled to be called a "Nayak" or Leader.

*General:* 1. Every male Andhra, between the ages of fifteen and fifty years shall be entitled to be a member of Ramadandu. Boys can be admitted, but they shall be unfit to lead.

2. Every village Dandu shall have a Temple as its seat of worship and action. Recitations and the reading of sacred books shall be the daily avocation of the *Mandir*. There shall be pictures of Gods or Goddesses in the temple, and there shall also be permanent ritual. Religious books and papers devoted to good causes and actions shall also be read in the *Mandir*.

3. Every member shall subscribe his mite every month or on every sacred day.

4. There shall be a notice-Board and a suggestion-Book.

5. The Dandu shall, of its own accord or at the instance of others, assist all popular and good causes. Besides, they shall execute all deeds declared as *Ramakaryam*, either by the village Panchayat, the Taluk Sabha, District Board or the Dharma Sabha. Any act not agreed upon by a majority of the Dandu shall not be persisted in.

6. The Provincial gathering of Ramadandus shall meet once a year, for seven days—Sapthaham—at a holy place.

7. Boys shall obey the orders of their teachers, who are members of the Dandu.

8. Young men shall rise early; perform ablutions; take Physical exercise (harmonised with Religion like హాసమాన్ బస్కీలు and offer prayers. Every endeavour shall be accompanied with the Holy Name. Stories, songs, dances, recitations, lectures and other performances shall be arranged in the evenings.

9. In every village, the protection of the poor shall be a sacred duty for the Ramadandu. For this purpose, asylums shall be established for the poor and the beggars in the village, providing for their food, shelter etc., and shall even utilise their energy for any fruitful purpose.

10. A village Dandu shall endeavour to spread the glory of God's Name through Flag, Music, procession etc. to the neighbouring villages, and shall thus endeavour to fill the world with Love and Mercy. Rules are prescribed for such Dandu Marches.

11. The village Dandu shall hearken to any cry for help from the neighbouring or far-off places, and assist to help them as far as possible.

12. To popularise and assist the affairs and actions of Ramadandu among the Andhra people, to publish the news of the various parts and places, and to serve as a forum for the discussion of the rules and laws of Ramadandu, a paper, called the 'Ramadandu', shall be started.

“Swasthi Sree Ramarpanamasthu”!

It remains to add a brief resume of this wonderful organisation, which, it is a pity, had not received at the hands of the Congress authorities that recognition and support which its actual achievement had entitled it to. In his Presidential Address at the Godavary Volunteer Conference at Alamur (1924), Gopalakrishna himself narrates his experiences thus: “I feel sad to confess that, since the beginning of this Non-cooperation movement, all my trials for extending the Ramadandu organisation and obtaining patronage of Congress Committees for it, have been persistently opposed by some of our important workers. God only knows the reason. I don't think even Mahatmaji ever advised these gentlemen against it, but somehow this misfortune continued until, thanks to Mr. Prakasam's leadership, it was just recently allowed shelter under the Congress auspices, in a resolution passed at a meeting of the (Andhra Provincial Congress) Committee, at Nellore. But then I knew after Mr. Prakasam's resignation from the Presidentship of the Committee, I have very little hope of its continued patronage. Even your volunteer organisations at the time of the Cacanada Congress quietly ignored even thinking of this  
 -----But even now it is not too late for you

to consider whether it is not the proper, the only correct Volunteer organisation that can be of any use or that can attain to any degree of efficiency. I can point-blank tell you that, without the religious motif, you can never secure in any Volunteer organisation that unquestioning submission to leadership, that undoubting faith in the ideal and ungrudging self-abandonment to the work that are the essential ingredients of a really self-less Volunteer. And surely in Andhra at least one cannot think of any other religious organisation than Ramadandu. At least the mass of Andhras know and understand it. The little success we had in the conduct of Chirala affair is, as you all know, entirely due to this organisation. That a population of 18,000 people could give up their ancestral homes and live out in sheds of palm leaves for a long eleven month was entirely due to this Ramadandu spirit. Can you have the strength to consider its adoption? Our ancestors had Ramadandu to protect them against the plundering Rohilla or the Thug.....Are we cleverer than they?..... It appeals to our imagination in a more abundant degree than the colourless *Santisena*. It gives us the necessary and powerful religious impulse. It gives room for no discord.....It bears the traditional idiom of response to National troubles. It has demonstrated its utility at least in Chirala. I ask again, Can you accept it? Or would you rather wait until our Ramadandu is duly certified and commended by a North Indian loss?"

But a year later, writing in May 1925, after having been fully disillusioned about the Congress-



ional public life, he wrote: "I am glad you have at long last realised there is no God in the existing Congress Committees of Andhra nor any good either.....I know a Godless Committee can little comprehend the worth and value of Ramadandu. But I have been in it for long and I would'nt be true to myself if I hadn't brought all my offerings to it. Now that I see the end of it all there, I shall indeed, work it outside. A sort of free masonry we shall work it into, of course purely on a religious basis. And Religion is work of Real Life." (Letters to G.V.S.)

Again in July of the same year; "Disaffiliation of Ramadandu (from the Congress Committees) I have decided upon. I shall say things on it after I finish all my personal affairs and feel free to work it".

This "finishing" and "feeling free" to work up the Ramadandu, alas! have never been; because soon after, illness overtook him and death defeated him from doing any more of physical work.

While on the subject of Ramadandu it may be useful to summarise Gopalakrishna's views on our Flag. In 1920, as shown above, he suggested "the most pure, illustrious and powerful Vajra.....coupled with the figure of.....Sree Anjaneya or some other not inconsistent with the conception of Rama Dandu shall be the insignia of the Dandu Flag". The Congressional "Tri-colour and the Charka" were not yet born at that time; and that

original conception was in a single colour—the red of the Hindus—with a *Chakra* (wheel), and two figures of Sree Anjaneya on either side. Later on, after Gandhiji came out with his ‘National Flag’ which was an improvement on the Besantine “Red and Green” (symbolic of the Hindu and Muslim) of the Home Rule days of 1916-17, Gopalakrishna tried to accommodate even the “Tricolour and Charka” in his Dandu Flag; and we will find that design on the front page of his Volunteer Address, the charka itself being now of bone, not wood as in the simple Gandhian variety, and the spinner being the Hanuman, and not a human. It shows how Gopalakrishna, while being true to his Ideals, was ever ready to accommodate himself to external ideas and influences not inconsistent with his own. But when he found the utter futility of these new-fangled ideas, he wrote on 26—5—1925:

“Of course, I am not attending that Palivela Conference, and I am glad. A few days back, I got a letter from the Secretary, Reception Committee that they could not accept any suggestion until the All India Congress Committee acknowledges the Ramadandu Flag! One should have thought or known this much that a local variation is always admitted; and even the Union Jack has its modification when hoisted on India (with the Star of India impressed on it). Last year’s Alamuru Conference accepted it. The Andhra Volunteer Board accepted it; and even Sjt. Unnava Ramalingam Pantulu was one of the chief ‘worshippers’ of the Flag at Kovvur. Even Hardiker was in ecstasies over it but our

Palivela friends must be quite constitutional! So that's that.

"I am not, of course, sorry, and on the other hand, am quite happy on my services being rejected that way. For one thing, I could avoid all physical worry and trouble. If it were Ramaseva (God's service), I couldn't have avoided it, my delicate health notwithstanding. But a programme of hoisting a mere Spinners'—Weavers' Flag has happily helped me out of it.

"If the Flag were to symbolise the Nation's soul and its Sadhana, both *Bhukti* and *Mukti* must be indicated, and with plenty of graceful and incessant movement. The agent of the movement, Sadhaka, must also be represented and to every political 'Hindu', a Vanara best symbolises the Sadhaka. For he is out to establish Dharma for which "Rama-Rajyam" is about the best political translation. As the question of Musalmans and others existing under the Congress Flag has been solved at Alamur and Kovvur (by accepting to allow alongside of this their own modifications) and as no Musalmans and others worthy of account exist among the volunteers for whose benefit the Flag ceremony is particularised, this Ramadandu flag should have been accepted. A flag must have abiding value and its design must be a work of art. It must at least have some meaning. A simple Charka may exhibit the sorrow of the stomach merely. It is puerile to think it suffices to indicate the Nation's condition and concern. If Mahatma Gandhi also thinks so.....well, I shut up!"

## CHAPTER VIII.

## Chirala—Perala : Some Incidents and Events.

We shall now proceed to narrate a few incidents and events in the Chirala—Perala campaign.

Gopalakrishna's preparations for his Chirala Ramadandu were already complete when the Non-cooperation movement was started; and it is reported that, in his Presidential Address at the Godavary District Students' Conference held at Rajahmundry on 22—1—1921, he "described to his audience the Ramadandu started by him". But it was not until March of that year that he and his movement became well-known. On the 28th of March 1921, the All India Congress Committee was to meet at Bezvada to formulate its triple programme of one crore of Congress members; one crore of Rupees; and 20 lakhs of spinning wheels, the "Men, Money and Munitions" as Mr. C. R. Das had put it—and by that time already Chirala had finished a few preliminary skirmishes, and earned public recognition by sending twelve of its citizens including an aged woman, to jail, in the course of a non-payment struggle of the Municipal tax. And when the All-India Congress Committee met at Bezvada towards the end of March, Gopalakrishna arrived there in a special train with about a thousand of his Ramadandu troops and the part played by him during that historic gathering deserves more than a passing mention.

First, it is necessary to notice that, though Gopalakrishna was taking an active part from the very beginning, in the shaping of the National, Provincial and District Congress organizations, he and his Ramadandu were being—shall we say—suspiciously looked upon by those in authority in the Andhra Congress—God alone knows the reason why!

It is said that the Ramadandu were dressed in red uniforms,—symbolic of blood—while their own Gandhian colour was Khadi-white symbolic of ‘Non violence in Thought, word and deed!’ Stories were told about Gopalakrishna and his Ramadandu; and, it is reported, even Gandhiji’s mind was poisoned by those in authority in the Andhra Congress, for Gandhiji later on confessed that at first he held prejudiced opinions against Gopalakrishna!—But little did they realise that the mission of the Ramadandu was a purely religious one, in which non-violence had abundant scope and at least as Gopalakrishna had conceived of it, they lied who said that it was intended as a ruse for violence!

At Bezwada, though Gopalakrishna came with a band of one thousand, strong, disciplined and well-organised, non-violent soldiers, their presence was at first utterly ignored, and the Reception Committee worked up a cumbersome Volunteer Corps for receiving the Congress leaders and the vast concourse of people expected to gather. The Congress recruits were all educated people; while Gopalakrishna’s army was from the common folks: and these latter were found not only more earnest and

capable, but, in fact, more amenable to discipline and service than their more enlightened and cultured brethren. The Congress leaders organised hotels to feed the volunteers and others; Gopalakrishna ridiculed the idea of *Anna-Vikrayam* (selling food) as unnational, procured free feed for his Ramadandu, and even for a couple of thousand others, from the local merchants. The Congress Volunteers worked almost headlessly; while the Ramadandu had in their picturesque and cultured leader a most inspiring personality.

There were about 2 to 3 lakhs of people gathered from all parts of the country to pay their homage to Gandhiji (whom Gopalakrishna himself had lately proclaimed an Avatar) and other leaders; and the evening meeting was a remarkable thing, "quite a sea of humanity" as Acharya Gidwani had put it. And inexperienced and disunited among themselves as the Congress volunteers were, and without a proper leader, they proved utterly incapable even of organising a public meeting. The rush of the people was so great that in their attempts to have Darshan of the leaders and perhaps also a scramble for front seats, each push ended in a big tide, and actually there were at least two or perhaps even three moving waves of humanity; and on those occasions some of them were actually twenty to thirty feet above the ground, resting merely in the air, back to back and back to face. On one of those occasions, particularly, the very life of the Nation's idol, Mahatma Gandhi was actually in danger, his puny figure being badly exposed to one of those

moving waves and it was with the utmost difficulty that the massive arms of Shaukat Ali could form a strong cordon round Gandhiji to ward off the crowd and lead him out of danger. The Congress Volunteer organisation thus completely broke down; and if there were no serious casualties on that day, it was due solely to a Providential mercy.

The first day's meeting was thus a miserable fiasco; it was repeated the next day and the day after that: on these occasions, the volunteers bucked up a little; but their organisation was too loose and inept to serve a huge public meeting. On the third day, therefore, when all their efforts had failed, the Congress leaders out of sheer helplessness turned to Gopalakrishna for succour. Gopalakrishna cheerfully undertook the responsibility, but insisted that he should be allowed a free hand in the arrangements. The proviso was easily agreed to—in fact the leaders approached him out of sheer helplessness and were actually afraid of incurring public odium;—and at 3 o'clock A.M., bands of the Ramadandu were despatched to the "*Maidan*" or meeting-ground and were stationed in lines, forming squares of sitting space for the people, and broad streets for the leaders' cars to pass through. Before dawn, a thoroughly well-organised and beautiful human city of two to three lakhs of people was formed; and at 6 A.M., the leaders were gradually ushered in and led in procession, through lane after lane, addressing the people in every four-square corner. Everyone was pleased, overwhelmed with joy; and all praised Gopalakrishna and his Ramadandu.

There was on incident of the day particularly, which must be described. Limits were prescribed for the people to sit; but a Police officer tried to cross, with impunity, one of those limits. There was a wordy tug-of-war between the Police and the Ramadandu volunteers, and at one stage, an open rupture was feared. All eyes, including those of Gandhiji, were on the scene; Gopalakrishna arrived there and implored the Police gentleman to desist; and, when all persuasion failed, he prostrated himself before that impudent official telling him that if the latter must advance, it could only be by walking over their corpses and he offered himself as the first to fall. The official was at last moved and yielded whereupon he was conveyed back over the heads of the sitting people, to his allotted place in the rear.

Shortly after the Bezwada meeting, Gandhiji began a tour in the Andhradesa, in the course of which he visited Chirala on 7th April 1921. Gopalakrishna made elaborate arrangements to receive the great Guest in his sandy home and an address was presented on behalf of the Vidya Peetha Goshti, written in Telugu, with an iron quill on palm leaf, besmeared with turmeric paste, which pleased Gandhiji immensely; and, it is said that the latter kissed it to his eyes, saying he would cherish it as a treasure. Gandhiji also laid the foundation-stone of the Ramanagar-village; and, after the ceremonies were over, Gopalakrishna had to see him off, when not only the future of the Chirala campaign was discussed and settled, but he raised his 'Minute of dissent' regarding the Gandhian Philosophy, viz., whether the cult of 'Non-violence—*Prahlada-*



*Sadhana*, would not, in the long run, culminate in *Narasimham* i.e., God in His Terrible aspect, descending upon earth as the Man-Lion, red in tooth and fiery in claw and destroying all the embodiments of the egotistical and the monstrous. Gandhiji, it would appear, smiled at the query; but probably felt inwardly "puzzled and perplexed"; and asked if Gopalakrishna was presenting that aspect to his audiences. Being told 'yes', Gandhiji asked as to how they received the idea, and Gopalakrishna answered that the masses had enough culture in them and they understood him perfectly whereupon Gandhiji is said to have advised Gopalakrishna not to present it any more to his hearers, to which Gopalakrishna readily assented.

The exodus decided upon when Gandhiji was at Chirala was a remarkable event in the Chirala campaign. Direct civil disobedience, through non-payment of the Municipal taxes, with all its attendant risks of prosecutions, jail filling, sales, auctions, demonstrations and so forth was felt to be the one course open to the people of Chirala in their fight against the Municipality. But Gandhiji seems to have felt that the people might not be strong enough to bear the strain for long, and he feared that violence might break out at one stage. An alternative was, therefore, sought for and, it was found, that there was a less risky and—it was thought—equally efficacious method, which was to leave the town altogether and live outside the Municipal limits and let the Municipality die of inanition. And Gandhiji, it is said, advised the latter course. Gopalakrishna loyally took up the idea, and it was

really a sight for the gods to see how a 15 to 16,000 men, women and children; young, middle-aged and old; irrespective of caste, creed or sex; had at his command, left their ancestral homes; migrated to open fields on the outskirts of the town; and for a long eleven month, amidst sun and rain, through weal and woe, despite threats and smiles, had stayed on, in due loyalty to their chief, "Duggiralayya".

Scenes are described in that wonderful exodus as to how, at mid-day, in scorching sun, while the sands were burning hot, pregnant ladies and women with babies-in-arms; men and women with their essential belongings on their heads and shoulders; went cheerfully through the ordeal. The Police and the Government officials were on the alert to defeat the people, or at least to make an attachment or two for the realisation of their overdue; but such was the ingenuity of their ever-resourceful leader, and such was the vigilance of his ever-watchful Ramadandu, that all those efforts were of no avail. The help rendered by the Ramadandu, in particular, not only for a perfectly safe and orderly conveyance of men and things from the town, but in the erection of sheds for their living; maintenance of peace, order and good government during their one-year's stay, is rather imagined than described. *Panchayats* were held to deal out justice effectively to the delinquents; and more than one loyalist was levied a handsome 'fine' for the benefit of the new "Exchequer". The Government manoeuvred many times to wean away the people; but every one of them was utterly defeated. Government officials were

‘boycotted’ and had to retire for want of bare food and even water; and the great Rajah Saheb of Panagal himself had to retreat for want of a hearer. The villages were completely deserted; and in the new “Palmyrah city”, Gopalakrishna’s word was Law!

Before passing from the story of this exodus, perhaps mention must be made of one small point. Gopalakrishna’s original idea was a deliberate albeit non-violent resistance to the bureaucracy. But Gandhiji advised an Exodus, which of course Gopalakrishna readily took up, nay he worked it to a success. But that success itself was a short-lived one; and within a year it all broke down. And if the campaign had been conducted in the original, direct manner of attack contemplated by Gopalakrishna! No doubt, it would have lost some of the charms which the Exodus had actually revealed; but perhaps the other method could have furnished a more dynamic and, in the long run, more effective front than the sullen retirement,—the highly dramatic “boycott” of the Municipal premises—**had** actually proved. Fight—continuous, unending fight—from one’s own station in life was the life-breath of the movement which Gopalakrishna had led at Chirala; but when the people were banished from the “war-zone”, and when the “Man of million mysteries” was clapped off in jail, no wonder that the people retired into placidity; and gradually the dead bones of a Municipality had come back to life. Perhaps, and perhaps not!

In the earlier stages of the campaign, we are told, there was an incident which ought to be told. There is a village called Vetapalem adjoining the Chirala Railway station. And the leaders of Vetapalem decided upon the boycott of the Panchayat Court sanctioned by the Government. The proposal was blessed by Gopalakrishna, who went to Vetapalem; personally supervised the preliminary arrangements; took sworn pledges from the elders of the thirty communities in the village; reconciled the various factions among them; and came back fully satisfied that the boycott would go off splendidly on the Election Day. Everything was thus kept ready but on the appointed day, when Gopalakrishna was away at Chirala, the Government officials came with a posse of constables and threatened and coerced the leaders, who acquiesced in the elections. Gopalakrishna sent one or two volunteers in advance and himself arrived after noon, when already the thirty elders broke their troth; mustered strong their followers; and a huge meeting was assembled, to which the Tahsildar was reading the Panchayat rules for the benefit of the electors.

At first Gopalakrishna felt aghast at the sight before him. Still not losing heart, he drove by the side of the meeting and alighted where the chief officers were sitting and proceeded straight to the dias and quietly sat there, as if nothing had happened. Meanwhile the officials began to feel nervous; the men assembled looked at each other; leaders bent their heads in shame; the police got puzzled; and their chief passed word to the constabulary to

be on *bundobust*. The Tahsildar soon gained enough presence of mind to exchange an apologetic word or two with Gopalakrishna, telling him that they were merely doing their duty, and almost solicitous of his permission to proceed with the rest of the job, he even offered his bungalow for Gopalakrishna to retire. Gopalakrishna thanked the Tahsildar for his solicitude; but had no need for any of his kindness; said that he just came to see if the people were his own or were on the side of the Government; and, as he beheld with his own eyes that the Government had won, he had no more business there; therefore, he would certainly not impede their work, but would go. And he coolly left the place.

The meeting itself was held in the open, on a sandy ground, surrounded by a wild fence, which had a few openings for entrance. After Gopalakrishna left, those entrances were strongly guarded by the Police to prevent any of the audience from getting out. Gopalakrishna left the meeting thus alone, entered a neighbouring palmyrah grove, and facing the trees which were equally strong in numbers as the meeting was perhaps in men and were, indeed, much taller in stature shooting their leafy tufts high into the skies, while this puny humanity had sunk into the earth; he began to address them in a loud tone and commanding voice.

It may be stated here that Gopalakrishna was one of our greatest orators—perhaps the best that Andhra has produced—and already by this time, he could command an audience of 50 to 60,000 easily.

His addresses, it is well-known, were of the highest order, not only in respect of results—where he “easily moved millions”,—but in point of sheer quality which was unsurpassed. They were addressed to the mass, yet tuned in the highest key of culture; were interspersed with song and verse, wit and laughter; were addressed to the best in man; the style was superb; and the people would dance with joy or roar in laughter. As his method was approaching the Pauranika or the *Kathaka*, his addresses were more or less of the nature of *kalakshepams*. In his political meetings indeed, he had often to descend to the lower planes, because he had mostly to deal with crowds; but even here he tried and very often managed to lift them up rather than himself go low. He could speak in English, Telugu and even Sanskrit, it is said; and it is a pity that not one of his many discourses and speeches has been faithfully reported or preserved, either in extenso or with its proper intonation, gesture and idiom. It only shows how far backward we, in Andhra, are in point of deserving our great men.

But to return to the Palmyrah address. No report of it, like most others, has either been taken or preserved; but, in one word, it was an Address to the Trees! In the course of it, he sought to unburden himself to his ‘audience’ who, he said, were physically, morally, in every way superior to the race of human pigmies who betrayed their country, broke their plighted word, and submitted themselves in a cowardly manner to the Governmental Bahadurism. Endowed with his own brilliance and powerful thought and expression, he added now a

most stirring indignation at the treachery of the village elders; and addressing a 'non-communicative' Nature, he told those trees that they were his only fit company; and, to him, all men in this country were dead! Men in this land, he went on, had no sense of honour, no respect for vows, no fear of shame, but became puny in size, bended in brow, and submissive to slavery. While those trees were tall in stature, erect in pose, proud in disposition, looking aloft into the heavens, and were unlikely to move or change easily out of fear, incapable of sordid betrayals, and, therefore, were fitter assemblages for him to pour forth his aching heart!

Temperamentally, Gopalakrishna was a great lover of Nature. In his younger days, he was living in a garden-house at Guntur; and he was ever for his eyes to soar unhampered by human walls. While he was in England, he was going on long excursions, of 20 to 25 miles, up the hills and down, picking berries for Narada, the three year old boy of Dr. Coomaraswamy. After retiring from his educational activities, he turned to Chirala where he hoped to be in close proximity to the gaze of the sea whose vastness never ceased to inspire him. And subsequently, it is well-known that he was never enjoying himself more than when he was keeping company from his solitary arm-chair in Ramanagar, with the distant moon, or better still, the stars, the sky, the planets and other *Lokas* beyond this Earth. While he kept himself scrupulously out from any spectacular scenes of silent meditation or retirement to the woods, which resulted in the mediaeval

times particularly, in producing a race of meta-physicians rather than of true Seers,—Gopalakrishna was extremely fond of a constant communion with Nature; and it is no wonder, therefore, if he enjoyed his palmyrah troupe perfectly.

In loud tones, dead earnest about himself, forceful and impassioned in manner, and with fiery speech, sparkling with super wisdom, rather of the heavens than of this earth, addressing the trees and to the divinity in them, he soon made himself audible to the 5 or 6,000 men nearby, against whom he had but turned his back a short while ago. And one by one, through one pretext or another, these men also bestirred themselves and gradually began to glide away from the meeting-place, unobserved by or perhaps with the silent acquiescence of the police on guard, and they began taking their seats under the palmyrah shelter. Thus within 10—15—30 minutes there came slowly 10—20—50 and the figure was swelling and all along Gopalakrishna went on addressing the trees and reviling the base perfidy and inhumanity of man. And as his audience was increasing, the police got anxious; the Tahsildar was still reading his 'Rules'; the people were getting restive; and already a fifty of them had left, when a batch of two or three and four was hindered in its path at one of the exits. After a full hour's performance before the trees, Gopalakrishna just looked back for a minute and beholding the batches struggling still to come, acclaimed in a loud voice: "No power on earth can prevent a determined soul from coming out. Those who are willing, shall not be stayed by the bayonets of a hired constabulary!"



Straight-away, up rose a hundred men on each side, and with the aid of their hand-sticks, they felled down the loose sandy-fencing and made a hundred path-ways; and, in less than a twinkle, all the five or six thousands less their thirty leading men and their body-guard, were restored to Gopalakrishna and his Palm-trees. And for a full three hours or more, i.e. till it was past 6 p.m. when the time for the Panchayat election automatically expired, the Palmyrah discourse went on in high spirits and in great glee while the poor Tahsildar and his helpless associates stayed on all the while, but the Panchayat itself couldn't be formed!

Thus ended one of the most picturesque and dramatic episodes of Gopalakrishna's campaign in supreme triumph for his Lord, Sree Ramachandra, but to the mighty grief of the Government and its myrmidons. We mention it not only because it interests the mind, but we are yet to find another man who had the cheek to defy an opponent under such disheartening circumstances—literally he was one against 6,000—or who managed a victory in the manner in which he did. We read in books that some of our great men and women had wept over the loss of a dear wife or husband, and opened their hearts to the neighbouring trees and plants; or even that, in their love-frenzy, they beheld their beloved in every bush or shrub which they passed by in their quest. But it sounds absolutely novel that Gopalakrishna should have wrung out a success out of the trees! And more so that the trees themselves should have thus willingly volunteered, where men had

failed to serve! And through that Gopalakrishna showed the greatness of the human spirit, as opposed to the forces of treachery and of brute-force, and he established, too, the kinship between Man and Tree, a truth hallowed by the researches of another distinguished country-man of ours, viz. Sir J. C. Bose. What Bose showed in his laboratory, Gopalakrishna revealed it in practical life; and both are great, because they showed us the unity between the Living and the Non-living.

We must pass over, however unwillingly, a good deal of the story relating to the day-to-day struggle at Chirala. Gopalakrishna himself was present for over half the period of the struggle; and when he was clapped in jail, his inspiration guided and led the people to a certain extent. Every day there were judicial tribunals, legislative enactments and administrative orders; and almost every affair of every individual citizen was within the purview of the Panchayat over which Gopalakrishna presided. Doubts disappeared in his presence; fears vanished before him; and life became a new joy to the new subjects of the "Gopalakrishna Raj". And, it will be interesting to note, that the whole thing, comprising the leaving of home-steads, erection of new sheds, succour to the helpless, advertisement, demonstration, processions, prosecutions, Railway expenses etc. didn't cost the public more than about Rs. 10,000 (Ten Thousand Rupees only)! While for a similar enterprise at Bardoli, Gandhiji actually laid by 10 lakhs of Rupees in 1921; the Sikhs spent a pretty large sum over their famous Gurukhabag

affair; and as recently as 1928, a sum of over two lakhs was spent for a two to three months prelude to a Bardoli No-tax campaign and another two lakhs was collected and kept ready for its prosecution, if it became necessary!

It is sad to reflect that even out of this Rs. 10,000 which was spent at Chirala, the amount was not easily forthcoming. The people of Chirala—Perala gave to the Congress over Rs. 8,000 by way of donations to the Tilak Swarajya Fund; and in return, the Provincial Congress Committee reluctantly granted a sum of Rs. 3,000 for the Chirala campaign. And even that grant was opposed by at least one prominent leader of the Committee! The rest was of course raised by Gopalakrishna himself or by door to door collections of self-less volunteers in places far and near; and when the Treasury was running out Gopalakrishna had to go in quest of “Sanjeevi” (the vital coin), for which purpose he went to Berhampore, the seat of the Andhra Conferences that year, where he was arrested and sentenced to jail under Section 108 Cr.P.C. Shortly after, he was brought back from jail, tried for “sedition” under Section 124-A, I.P.C. and convicted, but the good Judge said: “the two sentences to run concurrently”. The story of those arrests and Trials was published in the Press and makes most interesting reading. And when Gopalakrishna was removed from the scene of action, no one else came forward to take up his work; and in the course of the next five or six months, the movement slowly ebbed away and died.

## CHAPTER IX.

## Chirala-Perala—Its Effects.

To the superficial observer, the Chirala—Perala struggle ended in failure, because not only Gopalakrishna was clapped in jail, the people were coaxed or coerced into submission, by persecution, prosecutions, threats, burning of cottages (God knows by whom it was done!) and inducements through diplomatic offers and the award of at least one Rao Saheb!—which all resulted in a return of the people to their old town, without achieving their main object, viz. the abolition of the Municipality. For those men had vowed that they shall compel the Government to withdraw the Municipality, or in the alternative, to stay out of its precincts, so that it could die of inanition; but within a year of their resolve, while their leader was still in jail, they became demoralized; went back upon their resolve; and accepted the very Municipality on which they had waged such a bitter warfare for so long. It is, therefore, apparent that, on the principal issue, the Government had won; and the people lost their battle.

This is, indeed, true from the broad and external point-of-view; and the Government may justly be proud of their score over the people and over Gopalakrishna. But if the full truth of the matter has got to be told, the victory of the Government was but a pyrrhic triumph, for, not only was the extent of their success very qualified and limited as judged from the nature of the conditions which were

finally agreed to between themselves and the people; and one of them it is said, was that there should be no increase of taxes from the old Union level; but chiefly from the direct and indirect results which had accrued from the Chirala campaign, which must be pronounced a distinct gain for Gopalakrishna and the Nation.

But before we proceed to sketch the main results of the Chirala movement it will be instructive to narrate the chief causes which contributed to the failure of the campaign, as it was led in 1921.

First, the cause itself, from one stand-point, was a petty one. The issue was a very small one, indeed, being the abolishing of a municipality over a small town: it did not embrace even the wider political, i.e. National Swaraj, though it helped politics and politics helped it too, to a considerable extent. And there was complete absence of the spiritual or religious in motif, though Gopalakrishna endeavoured to religioise it in method; but the want of a main urge must have been a serious handicap to a successful ending of the fight.

Secondly, jealousy of fellow-Congressmen in Andhra was another cause of the failure of Chirala. The foremost leaders of the province were either luke-warm or awfully jealous of Gopalakrishna and his work. As Gopalakrishna himself said later on: "why Chirala failed.....was that ever since they started the Chirala affair, the leaders—all honour to them, honour for their valour and death for their ambition had exhibited indecision and want of self-confidence.....Except Mr. S. Sreenivasa Iyengar

of Madras, none came there. No Congress Committee came to enquire into their conditions and, in spite of one of their leaders, Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya, the Congress ultimately gave Rs. 3,000. The leaders began to grow nervous.....They were amateurs in the game, they did not know how to educate the masses.....They lacked the sense of responsibility”.

A chronic division of the people and a general want of national character and solidarity was another cause for the failure of Chirala. “The most important cause why Chirala failed was the utter lack of comradeship amongst them. They were keeping on public life with artificial respiration. The tie of religion which united all the people together.....was absent”. “The people had multifarious divisions, quite discordant divisions.....It was our social bondage that was perpetuating our political serfdom.”

The decision of the Bardoli Resolutions whereby the Non-cooperation movement in the country was suspended *sine die* was a great shock to the Chirala campaign. Gopalakrishna went to jail in October 1921 when the movement was at its high tide; and in February 1922, the country was let down from the highest pinnacle to the bottom-most depths. And with the Nation, Chirala also fell. The whole country was demoralised; and it spread to Chirala also. If there was no set-back in the country, it is quite possible that Chirala could have held on for a much longer period. Even as it was, it is remarka-

ble that it persisted for a full four months even after the great 'Backing at Bardoli'.

Want of adequate funds and workers was perhaps another cause. In spite of its other defects if there was more money there could perhaps have been more work done. But they had to do it all with a Rs. 10,000! Not even the Congress would help it! After Gopalakrishna went to jail, no single leader took up his place. They all thought of new places and grander movements; and the result was a miserable abortion, e. g. Peda Nandipadu.

The above are some of the chief causes which led to the ultimate failure of the Chirala campaign. But we should now advert to a few aspects of the main significance of the struggle, because the Chirala movement, unlike many other political events, is not of an ephemeral interest merely: its effects are long-lasting and its significance must, therefore, be borne in mind by every future worker that may choose to walk in its line.

Firstly, as Gopalakrishna himself was claiming, the movement was a psychological experiment in mass leadership. In his own words, like the Sree Krishna of old, he had to be or rather exhibit in himself, a 16,000 facets to satisfy all the 16 000 men, women and children, who chose to follow him. His theory was briefly thus; A 'leader' is either a Guru i. e. Teacher or Husband. And all his followers are related to him either as pupils or wives. Again, all followers represent each a differing individuation of

**Life.** And the leader, like the Guru, must respond psychically to each individual Sadhaka in a like chord of his being. Thus the leader, in answering to the calls of a multiple mass becomes a multiple personality. And Gopalakrishna claimed that Chirala afforded him one such mighty experiment.

Secondly, his was an attempt at running a parallel Government, or rather at organising a new state or society, on a limited scale of course. To understand this view-point correctly, it is necessary to go back to the circumstances which he had to face. The country was in the grip of a foreign government; the Congress had pledged itself, under Gandhiji's inspiration, to "establish Swaraj in India in the year of Grace 1921", and Gopalakrishna undertook the responsibility in the Andhra Province, and his Chirala-Perala was his humble contribution. But how did he do it?

In his own words: "During the eleven months there was no Municipality in Chirala, they had their own Committee's ruling. There was not a single case of violence during the period. To organise self-government in a village which consisted of so many communities, they had to keep aside democracy, lest it should degenerate into mobocracy. In Chirala they had thirty communities, each being represented on the Committee."

Later on, he reverted to the subject more fully and said that, if the Congress leaders had been sincere, they must aim at running a parallel admini-



stration in India. Thus writing to a friend in 1927, he declared: "If these people really believe in democratic swaraj they should have gathered all those who had entered the Legislatures on the Congress ticket into a new and independent constituent Assembly and declared their determination to enter into a final fight for Swaraj with the British Government.....Before presenting any 'National demands' to the Government, we should first organise the Nation and then ask for an answer from the Government."

There are many people now-a-days who talk of Independence. But few of them probably realise that there can be no attainment of Independence or Self-Rule for any country without an attempt at running a parallel government on how-so-ever humble a scale. And we daresay, that in such rehearsals for Swaraj, that of Chirala must be ranked as a classical one.

Thirdly, Chirala afforded a wonderful example of a communal adjustment among the warring, jarring communities of the present-day India. There are many communities in the country; and, one by one, all of them are gradually requiring to send their quota, and sometimes even more of members to the legislative, administrative and even judicial bodies, and thus "communal representation" has become a common cry in several parts of the country. But it will be interesting to notice that in his Chirala movement Gopalakrishna had organised a village council or Panchayat wherein he gave representation to each

one of the thirty communities existing in the place. This shows that he wanted to federalise the several communities, on an equal basis; and we find the principle is potential of great results. The recognition of every existing community, as an ancillary to his wider Synthesis of all existing Faiths in the world (cf. his Trial statement), with full freedom and equal rights and the several communities moving in unison with common ties of interest and a common feeling of oneness—this seems to be the spirit of the things towards which the country is fast moving and in the revival of the ancient *Panchayat* principle of a general synthesis, on the basis of a village unit, of all the existing communities according to their trades or functions, Chirala has had its own contribution to make.

The emergence of the Ramadandu as an inspired and deeply religious mass-organisation, as suited to the present times of stress and struggle, is a direct contribution of the Chirala campaign. For all movements of mass action, it is well-known, give rise to a good deal of unrest and bitterness which might, if not properly controlled, easily tend to anarchy and worse. And at such crises, the organisation of a band of people, comprising the mass in its millions, of all grades and classes of society, inspired by a religious motive, and trained up in a traditional manner, could easily be the best antidote for all such ills. And in this sense, the Ramadandu was really a blessing to the country.

Among the indirect results which accrued out of the movement, the following are noteworthy.

It produced a healthy curbing effect on the actions of the bureaucracy, as witnessed from the withdrawal of the Repalle Municipality, whose creation was also proposed and opposed at that time.

It served as an object-lesson to the people, of what a self-respecting community can do to resist the tyranny of an unsympathetic bureaucracy.

So far as Gopalakrishna was concerned, it took him easily to the top-most crests of fame and glory; and the "hero of Chirala-Perala" was a house-hold word in the Andhradesa, nay, even outside Andhra, his was the one Andhra name which was heard or remembered even to this day.

It also enlarged his mind; ripened his experience and fixed his vision keenly not only on the goal, but on the means of reaching it, with due regard to the strong and slippery points on the way. And his experience in this direction must be deemed really invaluable.

But the most tragic part of the incidental results of this campaign was that it made Gopalakrishna a complete wreck in life for his body was fully "consumed" by the fiery ordeals of this all absorbing movement, with the result that he lost about a 100 lbs. in weight—from 225 to 120—during that one year of campaigning—while the rigours of the jail-life which followed proved a veritable blessing; and he actually gained 30 lbs. in the Trichinopoly jail, even on his 'C' class diet and treatment!

## CHAPTER X.

## Some Non-cooperation Politics.

We have lingered long on Gopalakrishna's Chirala Episode, not because it was the best part of his life or achievement—to our mind, it is not worth half as much as his comradeship with his friends,—but that, in this sterile age, it is easily the best we have produced in this country, and, what is more, it has valuable lessons to teach for the guidance of our future. But we should now proceed to a rapid survey of at least a few of the many political landmarks which adorned his life as a Non-cooperation worker.

The first active work which engaged his attention along with that of others was the boycott of the Reformed Legislatures of the country; and it is said that he did very good work in that direction. It was probably his own zeal and determination which ultimately convinced even doubters like the Desabhakta; and at his own Chirala centre, we are told, the only two votes that were polled in favour of Mr. J. Kuppaswamy Chowdary, who was an influential candidate, were those of his two Clerks!

The elections were finished by November 1920; in December there was the Nagpur Congress; he soon prepared for his Chirala campaign; and early in January 1921 he began with a few other leaders of Guntur a whirl-wind tour in several of the Andhra districts, propagating the Nagpur creed. On the 14th of January, he presided over a Bapatla Taluk

Conference; on 21st, he presided over the Godavary District Students' Conference at Rajahmundry, where he appealed to the students to come out of their schools and colleges, sacrifice their studies for one year, and work for swaraj. "All are bound to die one day", he is reported to have declared, "whether of some epidemic or disease or otherwise. Then why not they sacrifice themselves in a noble cause, for the sake of their country?" "In this University of Life", he said, "of which God is the Chancellor, they should try to graduate by attaining *Moksham*. .....Europe had banished God out of its jurisdiction and He is reappearing in India in the form of Gandhi, even like Narasimha to destroy the bureaucratic Hiranyakasipa. India can never find a more auspicious occasion than the present, better means than Non-violent Non-cooperation, and a greater leader than Mahatma Gandhi." Subsequently he addressed several meetings at Cocanada, Ellore, Bhimavaram, Guntur, Tenali and Bapatla, where he drew out large numbers of students out of their schools and colleges. At Tenali, it is reported, as a result of his preachings, "only 150 out of 1200 attended the school; and the school was closed for a week". Again, at the end of the week, the "attendance was miserably poor, and the strike was continuing". At Ellore, he was largely responsible for collecting a decent sum from the local zamindars and founding the Gandhi Maha Vidyalayam, which is still continuing.

In March 1921, we have already seen, he brought his Ramadandu to the Bezwada All India Congress

Committee meeting, where it won him laurels from every leader. Early next month, Mahatmaji visited Chirala and gave his blessings to him and to the people of Chirala—Perala, and he even wrote several articles in his 'Young India', in praise of Chirala. The next few months were very busy months for him, in connection with the Chirala Exodus and after. On the 10th June, the Guntur District Conference met at Ponnur; congratulated the brave people of Chirala; and as a mark of appreciation of the great services of their leader, alike to Chirala and to the Andhradesa, they bestowed upon him the title of Andhra Ratna, by which he was ever after popularly known.

Chirala—Perala was of course his chief contribution to the Non-cooperation movement; and, with the rise of Chirala, the whole of the neighbourhood, particularly in the Guntur district, was thrown into a ferment. Under this inspiration, whole areas began to "prepare" themselves for mass civil revolt, including the Non-payment of Governmental Revenues. Thus the boasted No-tax campaign of Guntur, in our view, was but an echo of the Chirala movement; and we also suspect that the leaders of the district, in their anxiety to vie with each other, had under-rated the strength of Chirala and over-rated their own worth. As a consequence, instead of rallying, as one man, to the side of Chirala at the time of its trial, they set up their own petty shops in every corner where they had to eat the humble pie, under the orders, first of the far-off Gandhiji and then of the existing local Government.

In August 1921, it is said that Gopalakrishna presided over the Anantapur District Conference; in the same month there was the Krishna *Pushkaram* at Bezwada, where he delivered speeches on the religious sanction for war and also defending Gandhiji's cult of Non-violence side by side.

In September, he went to Berhampore to attend the Andhra Provincial Conferences, where he delivered speeches which "certainly incited the people to prepare themselves for civil disobedience eventually", and thereby very much disturbed the placidity of a district which, in the words of its Collector, "had hitherto been spared such excess of political madness." His speeches naturally invoked the wrath of the Government, who tried to silence him with a gagging order under section 144, in "due disobedience" of which he spoke again; was arrested under section 108 Cr.P.C.; put to trial and regretfully sentenced to suffer one year's simple imprisonment by the Magistrate who would "much rather prefer his executing a bond" and furnish security. But Gopalakrishna was determined to give security only to a "free Government". A report of this first trial of Gopalakrishna's—for he had to face a second trial shortly afterwards—will be found in Part II and makes very interesting reading. After the sentence, he was removed to the Trichinopoly jail; but in November he was brought back to Masulipatam on a charge under section 124 A.I.P.C., and tried for sedition in some of his speeches delivered at Ellore, Bezwada etc. This second trial whose story is reproduced at some length in Part II is a

most important one, not only for its wealth of wit and repartee at a moment of grave trial for himself; but because it states his faith most vividly thus: "Swaraj, therefore, means the preservation of Hindu Dharma, Muslim Dharma, Christian Dharma, Parsi Dharma, Sikh Dharma, in short, the Swadharma of all, and a coordinated federation of all, which are now being threatened with destruction by a positive Godless philosophy, industrial anarchy and spiritual famine that beset the world at the present moment". The magistrate, however, found him guilty of the charge, and sentenced him to nine months simple imprisonment, the sentence however, thanks to the judge, to run concurrently with the previous one.

The substance of his Berhampore speeches is important and interesting in more than one respect, and deserves at least a passing mention. He is reported to have urged the continuance of a separate Andhra Mahasabha besides the purely political conference every year, so as to enable the Andhras of various schools of thought to meet and discuss things in a purely cultural and non-political focus. He appealed for help to his Chirala; congratulated De Valera, the Irish Republican Leader and Zaghlul Pasha, the Leader of the Egyptian Independence,—and pleaded for the recognition of Ramadandu by the Andhra public. His appeal for the last was quite characteristic; and the thesis which he developed was, briefly, thus.

Sree Ramachandra, his favourite God, was an Andhra, because he lived in the Andhra country for thirteen or fourteen years; and even according to the



modern laws of domicile, he must be deemed a "citizen" of Andhra. And Ramachandra now lives, in his immortality of course, on the shores of the Godavary, in a village called Bhadrachalam. And according to our tradition, as the real sovereign of the State is God Himself; Ramachandra is the real President of the Andhra Provincial Congress Committee; and, therefore, the Ramadandu, which was His Army, and which helped the Lord to rescue His own Queen of Liberty from her cruel exile in Lanka, should be the means for us also to bring back our national freedom. Thereupon a famous doubt was expressed by some puritanic friend in the assembly, whether, Rama being a 'Hindu' God and Ramadandu a purely Hindu organisation, it would not be resisted by the non-Hindus in the Congress, particularly the Muhammadans. On its merits the question had already been disposed of by providing for a separate existence for the followers of the Muslim faith; but Gopalakrishna's off-hand reply to his interpreter that day took the position of a National Unity much ahead of his former 'Live and let live', and indicated a virtual synthesis between the two communities. For confining himself to the Muslims,—in reply to the criticism, he said:

The Muslims are worshippers of the Moon, the Crescent; and Siva, who is but one form of the Trinity also wears the Crescent on his Crown. Therefore the Muslims who are Crescent-worshippers, are devotees of Siva who is but a part of Sree Ramachandra, the divine Incarnation; and it also follows that they are all Saivites or followers of Siva; and,

as proof thereof, he cited humorously that there is a pseudonym for Siva as 'Mulana Shankatalli, and in the North-western Frontier Province, the Muslims call the Prophet as 'Shanker-khan'. (Whatever the truth of this Prof. Macdonnel notices a remarkable fact, viz. that one of the Upanishads of the Atharvaveda is actually a Mohemmadan Treatise, called the *Allah-Upanishad*). Thus he went on describing the similarity between the worshippers of Siva and the Muslims, in respect of their martial instincts and traditions (as followers of Rudra or the God of Destruction!) and even instituted a comparison between the beards of the Muslims and that of Siva (for whom he invented one) who, out of delicacy to accommodate his two sweet-hearts, viz., Ganga and the Moon, on his head, ceased growing his tufts from the head and, instead, shifted them on to the chin; and the Muslims, therefore, as His (Siva's) descendants, had taken to a round head and a long beard! Thus, the Muslims also, as followers of Siva, were in every way entitled to form an integral part of the Ramadandu—for both Saivites and Vaishnavites could become members thereof;—while keeping, of course, their Islamic traditions intact. And if the interrupter had still any doubts why? Is not His Exalted Highness the Nizam of Hyderabad himself the chief Trustee for the Lord Sree Ramachandra of Bhadrachalam?

Significant to his faith and professions, as Leader of the Ramadandu, while the Police arrested him and took him to jail, it is said that he commenced his journey with the famous Telugu song, which, rendered into English, read thus:

“March, March On!

To sacred Bhadradri,

Oh! sinful pot, (referring to the body),

Now let us go.”

(“పద వే భద్రాద్రికి

పాపిష్టిపొతుమా”)

With this song on his lips, and being about the first in those days to go to jail, it is no wonder that he converted jail-going into a pilgrimage.

The one-thing standing prominently in his jail-life was that it gave him for a year, the much needed rest, without which possibly he should have broken much earlier. But when that much is said, it must be confessed that the treatment he received in jail was anything but what a man of his eminence and culture should have received. For instance, he was not to read any newspapers or books; and what was worse, he couldn't take, for a long time, any paper or pencil with him! For such a brilliant soul like him, a forced rest in jail could be converted into a blessing in disguise, if the prosecuting authorities had behaved more humanely and if they had allowed him some books, papers etc. Several great men of the world have thus utilized similar opportunities for the lasting benefit of mankind; but in the case of Gopalakrishna, the Government refused even the writing materials: and when they actually gave him a wretched pencil and a numbered note-book, they gave it niggardly and even that came too late. The

scribblings which he made therein constitute the outlines of a series which he later on began in his 'Sadhana', under the caption of the "Confessions of a Convict". But unfortunately neither he nor his journal could live on to see the completion even of that series.

The one anxiety he had in jail was about his aged grand-mother, who was now about eighty, and in one of his jail-musings, he expressed his concern for her thus: "My grandmother is very dear to me. She must have died, I think. My uncle tells me she is about to, but I don't believe him. He is too sentimental, he wants to spare me the tidings. But I don't think, she is still living. She died! She did well. There is no use of living any more. She lived only for me. She can be happy only when I am by her. But it is impossible for me to be so any longer, at least for a long time to come. Are the British going to grant us swaraj, to make one such old woman live? Until that event, I must be ever journeying to jail. And without me by her side, her life is wretched. No, the British are no such fools! It will be stupendous, monumental stupidity to grant me swaraj or to allow me out of jail. Sree Ramachandra was the only solitary example who accomplished such sublime folly. He exiled His Queen to satisfy a slandering Dhobi!....." Among the fragments of the other chapters which he projected on "Crime"; "I.C.S."; "Sound"; "women etc"; the one on "women", is most important as not only it gives us a clue into the inner workings of his mind at this period but because it states his views on the position of woman in a "true philosophy of Life".

“Do women impede our work?” After stating the one side of the question, wherein they seem to come in the way of man’s work because they cannot repudiate this world, which is “their native soil”, to promote whose interests they stand pledged, he discusses their chief and inner life-purpose, as compared with man’s. “If the masculine self-abandonment is roused to its sublimest effort,.....it would not falter from perpetuating a wholesale Jeevahar..... But woman’s supreme effort is *Jeevahar* itself. Her greatest achievement and sublimest is *Sati*. Indeed, there is Savitri, whose conquest and subjugation of Death is all-surpassing. Savitri returned, returned with the life of her Lord, but she returned into Immortality. Not into the finite, purposive Love of Life, but into the infinite, inconsequential Life of Love.....The menace of earthly separation is but an incentive to her supreme activity. All the sorrow of our women displayed at every turn in life is but a warning of the impending manifestation of their power for self-annihilation when it is needed..... Their smiles are but the assuring and reassuring external ripples of this fundamental resolve of Love—Love that is self-annihilation or self-transcendence”.....“women’s destiny is thus identical with man’s.”

This and the other writings of his at this time reveal that he must have been terribly introspective, searching in his mind, every bit of it, its strong and weak points, so as to fortify himself for the future. And one important line of this introspection was about the affairs of the country. For at the time he

went into jail he went with the fullest hopes about the eventual success not only of his Chirala—Perala but even of the bigger issue of Indian Swaraj, and possibly he hoped that he and his fellow-prisoners would be set free by an Act of the Swaraj Parliament itself. But while he was in jail, the 'Backing at Bardoli' gave a dead-set both to him and to the Nation, and his feelings on the same may be gathered from the following extracts from his later Madugula Address, which must be both interesting and instructive.

"The backing out at Bardoli was misunderstood. It had been suggested that either we should have gone on Mahatmaji's ultimatum or at least we should have come to some reasonable understanding with the Viceroy at Calcutta. True, Mahatmaji gave his ultimatum and fixed a period of eleven days before which everything was to be settled satisfactorily to us. It was a terrible step. What was it that he relied on? Does he not know that unity was still non-existent at the time and untouchability remained unremoved? He knew that all the items of the constructive programme which was subsequently enunciated, were still unfulfilled, but the whole phase of the movement had been quite different then from what it was afterwards. We had called upon the Nation to unite purely on the political platform, putting by for the moment all differences, religious and social, which, we promised, would be swept off our life, the moment we got Swaraj, by a stroke of the legislative pen. Mahatmaji felt, I humbly opine, the nation did thus respond.

The splendid success we had with reference to the Prince of Wales' Hartal, the almost delirious enthusiasm of the people which sent nearly 30,000 to the jails, the anxious readiness of the Government itself for peace and settlement, all these showed that the time was come. He felt his Tapas was approaching its consummation. He is the modern link in the chain of our sages and seers who accomplished super-human things for human weal by the aid of their own Tapas. He felt his will had developed into that that governs things on this planet. Did not the entire Indian National Congress explicitly, absolutely, trust at the moment to his will? He felt he has grown to the full spiritual stature he aimed at. If he willed swaraj to his country even the erst-while despondent doubter, the bureaucracy was inclined by the irresistible force of his righteous will towards yielding some such thing. There were ominous signs all round; the environment was portentous of something very catastrophic. He did the only thing possible for a true *Sadhaka*: He was right. He gave the ultimatum and gave his head as the price. But when the greatest gift one can afford was laid as offering, Reality revealed itself in all its ghastly form. *Dur-Nimittas* began to appear. All obscurities began to bore themselves and Nature began to warn! Chauri-Chaura was enough to still the greatest sacrifice. Mahatmaji began to think.

“There were, of course, two ways of thinking it out. One impels rushing on, despite the warning. The warning was only to test the strength of one's resolution regarding one's own offer. “Why should one be daunted by the appearance of obstacles? Who

impelled me to take this extreme step of ultimatum? Surely it is Providence, and Providence is not ignorant of realities. I am merely a 'Nimitta' in His hands. Perhaps the interpolation of this obstacle, the unavailing of all this horrible unpreparedness of the country is to test the transparency of me, his instrument. If I reflect these and not Him who is ever prepared I will fail. I shall not do that. He impelled me thus far, and whence is this 'Hridaya-Daurbalyam'? If this is a warning, wherefrom is this delay in vouchsafing warnings earlier? No, be it what it may, come what may, my business is up, let me rush on! The words already escaped my lips that it is unworthy to live longer in this country without Swaraj. I must go on". This is one way. There is *Viveka* here too, but it is *Para-Laukika Viveka*. Here we are not judges. We are incompetent. We have not grown even an infinitesimal part in that path. We can, however, see that, if this line was followed, Mahatmaji would have even met the fate of all saints; he would have straight got into our *Guru-Parampara*. Perhaps the Nation would have lost its head, a great national *Jeevahar* would have resulted, and in the conflagration, we would have got swaraj. Perhaps and perhaps not!.....

"But the second one is the path of *Loukika-Viveka*. "I am responsible for every step the nation is to take. I can never be too cautious. Here is a clear warning from Nature\*. Should I not

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\* He often used to say that "Nature warned Not Gandhi but Itself, whether she had chosen the proper Instrument". "The call came, but he (Gandhiji) was not ready". "Nature warns, not individuals, but Itself". "Oh! for a Tilak by the side of Gandhi at Bardoli!"



mind it? Even the disgrace, scorn and scoffing of the world are nothing before the act of saving a nation from an irrevocable fall. The nation will know bye and bye. I must now withdraw from the position. It may cost us anything, but it is necessary". This is the step he actually took. And Mahatmaji was the only one competent to take either of the steps. He chose the latter and the nation is grateful enough. Perhaps if he chose the first path, the nation would have been more grateful, but I emphatically deny the right of anybody who cannot assert of himself the same moral and spiritual height as Mahatmaji's to judge in this matter. Suffice it to say, we are none the worse for the backing out at Bardoli. A voluntary withdrawal even in the hour of approaching triumph will render the succeeding attempt only the more sure. Judged according to human standards, I humbly believe Mahatmaji was not at all wrong, and our faith in him shall tell us, that he can never be wrong. The very fact that we hadn't the nerve to repudiate him then and there shows it was right he was there and it was right what he 'did.'

His great hopes about his Guru, Gandhiji, achieving the impossible, or attaining to the unattainable, viz. Divinity, had also been smashed\* and, while he was in jail, a clean slate was placed before his

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“పురుషోత్తముఁ డనుకున్నాను. ఉత్తమపురుషుఁ డయినాడు”

నీ! గాంధీదేవుని రాజక కంచు ఢక్కలగాక కరతాళ శబ్దాల దరువుగోరె.

mind, and he utilised the occasion for fully revolving in himself the nature and defects of the national movement in India; and, after the deepest deliberation—which one of his unique Tapas and experience alone was capable of—he became fully convinced that our social unification must precede Political Freedom, and he accordingly formulated a new human synthesis—the well-known Brahmana Dharma—which he prophesied and even tried to propagate among his people, after his release from jail.

## CHAPTER XI.

## His Jail—Message.

Gopalakrishna emerged out of the Trichinopoly jail on the 2nd of October 1922,—a completely changed man, a new man altogether, grown in bulk and weight, wiser now, more determined, not only disillusioned, but with an illumination in his soul, of which his external beard was the visible symbol, vending his way to the Temple of Lord Sree Ranganadha, at Sreerangam on the shores of the Cauvery river; and as we pass with him through his jail-gate, we leave behind the political world, the world of doubt and darkness, of ignorance and avidya, and enter the realm of Light, Truth and Knowledge.

It has been said of our great God, Sree Krishna, that He was born in jail: in fact, the jail is known as His Birth-place; but apart from its historical veracity, it is of great significance that the Krishna of our story, as also that other 'Krishna of our times', viz., Sree Aurabinda Ghosh were both creations of our British jails, in the sense that their highest visions, their great messages and hopes, came to them while they were in jail; and both came out of it with a message of true Freedom—of Eternal Religion—*Sanatana Dharma*—said Sree Aurabindo; of *Brahmana Religion*, said Gopalakrishna.

Both these 'Sanatana Dharma' and 'Brahmana Religion' literally the ancient, yet eternal Faith and the Religion of the seekers, i.e. seekers after Brahman or God—are one and the same, the one being a

subjective counter-part of the objective reality of the other; and, if we examine carefully the inspired utterances of our great men of this age, not only in India but all the world over, we will find that these two messages of Sree Aurabinda Gosh and of Sree Gopalakrishnayya constitute the life-breath of our times and never has a word more glorious escaped the lips of man in this age of materialism and this—worldliness than the message of “Sanatana Dharma”, which, Gopalakrishna said, is “Brahmana Religion”. It was the privilege of an Aurabinda Ghosh to have received that message of *Sanatana Dharma* in the Alipore jail in 1909 and proclaimed it to the world soon after his coming out of jail; and he set himself now for more than twenty five years to realise it in life, and he is still doing *Tapasya* at Pondichery, in order that he may give the fruits thereof to the world: and it has been Gopalakrishna’s privilege also to have perceived it independently in greater flesh and blood perhaps, in its pristine beauty and simplicity, yet in its grandest glory and potentiality, and proclaimed the Brahmana Religion for a world seething with ignorance, untruth, ugliness and ungodliness; and he set himself to the mission of “Brahmanising all”, i.e. Brahmanising the non-Brahmins of India, nay, Brahmanising the non-Hindus of the world!

It was a great message, this, viz. of Brahmanising the world, which, in other words, means the creation of a new, universal Religion; new, because none of the existing faiths of the world, Hinduism, Mohammadanism, Christianity etc., has been able to

stay the forces of material greed and aggressive self-interest; yet old because it is based on the traditions of the *Brahman*, the Brahmins and the Brahmanas,—i.e. on God, His Seekers and the divine Scriptures, of this ancient and spiritual country:\*

And the need for it is well-known. For the world is in a state of chronic unrest, deep-seated anarchy, immersed in irreligion, sunk in ignorance and Tamasic darkness; and the cry every-where is, in the words of a famous scriptural text:

“From untruth unto Truth;  
From Darkness unto Light;  
From Death unto Immortality;  
Oh! Lord, lead us On”.

The recognition of the miserable plight of the human kind is there both in the East and the West; and from Japan, China, India, Russia, Turkey,

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\* In India, Brahma has been the *Praja-pati*, or Creator-God; Brahmanas the ancient scriptures; Brahmins the highest ideal in society; Brahmi the most ancient script; Brahma-vivaha, the most respected form of marriage; Brahmopadesam the revelation of the highest Truth; Brahma-Garbha the most divine knot; and verily, “*Sarvam Khalvitham Brahma*” (All that exists is Brahman). And even in the West, the term *Brain* is derived from Brahman, while the most famous “Press” is the *Brahma-press*!

Italy, Germany, England, France, Africa, America, every where in the world there are souls who are yearning after this supreme Bliss of a God-realisation, the reaching of a God-state and the building of a God-society and Religion;—and everywhere we find the cry and the search of “Where? Oh! Where?” i.e. to say, “where is God? What is His state? How to seek Him? And whither to go? Who is He? What is He called? What are we? What is life? And what happens after we ‘die’? And again, what is our Dharma or highest duty? Which way lies our path? And how to tread that path which leads us on unto Him?”

Thus there has been a remarkable agreement among the Doctors of the world, who are all unanimous that the world is suffering to-day from a terrible disease, which is eating into the very vitals of our existence, and which, if unchecked, will lead the world fast into a pathless perdition. We know the symptoms of that disease. Man hates man; nation murders nation; religions are at war; and God kills them all! While disease, famine, poverty pestilence, war and anarchy all these visit the world more or less at regular intervals.

But when the doctoring comes, lo! they differ! There are a good number of quacks who are of course no good; and among the real thinkers and leaders of mankind, we will find that a few, indeed, have hit upon a few formulae for the redress of the world. First there is Theosophy. Throughout the world, it has got at present the widest working organisation; and it has also done good work in the

past. But its defects are equally obvious. For it represents but an imperfect synthesis, being but a westernized attempt at understanding the Spirit of India. Then there is the Order of the Ramakrishna Mission, ushered in by that Master-mystic Swami Vivekananda, who familiarised the word *vedanta* to the west and achieved considerable success in winning over a portion of the west to the cause of a new and universal Religion based, as he was fond of putting it, on the *vedanta*. A 'Universal' Religion for the world was his life-long dream and aspiration and, for its realisation, he felt that the Vedanta gave him the clue; and, with *Vedanta* on his lips, he carried aloft the Banner of Adwaita or the fundamental oneness of the universe, across the length and breadth of America and really did much in preparing the way.

What Vivekananda did, however, under his Masters' inspiration, was mere spade-work, the preliminary propaganda—the tilling of the soil and the removing of the weeds—and the real work, so far as the world's new Religion is concerned yet remains to be done. Vivekananda, indeed, had a foretaste of it; and he refers to it repeatedly in his speeches. But the world around him, even like the Andhra of Gopalakrishna's day, was too much sunk in ignorance and darkness and he could hardly dispel that inertia. The lamps were, indeed, lighted; the world has got new knowledge; the soil is being tilled and got ready; and the time is perhaps nearing for the sowing of the seeds of a new Religion, which is ancient, yet eternal.

In this state of things, we will find, Sree Aurobindo's *Sanathana Dharma* and Gopalakrishna's *Brahmana Religion* are the two most positive contributions;—both in fact, are one: and both have curiously come from the jail-door. *Sanathana Dharma* was the word that was put into the mouth of Sree Aurobindo Ghosh at Alipore; to be the Brahmin and to Brahminize every one—was the message revealed to Gopalakrishna while he was at Trichinopoly; and as soon as he came out of jail, he began proclaiming it as a new Gospel.

His coming out of jail was thus a triumph for Gopalakrishna, for it synchronised with the climax of his life-mission. Everything before had led to that Supreme Moment; everything after was an attempt at planting in life that great Ideal—the Ideal of Brahmanization *i.e.*, the raising of everyone to the level of a Brahmin, or rather putting every soul in this world on the path of Brahman or the spiritual High Path. And, verily now he became *the Prophet of a new creed?*



## CHAPTER XII

On "Brahman", "Brahmins" and  
"Brahmanism".

In the last chapter we have read of Gopalakrishna's jail-message of Brahmanization; but before we proceed, we should pause awhile to notice at least a few references on that much abstruse and highly philosophic concept of *Brahman*, which is the bed-rock of Brahmanism, verily the goal of India's Religion, ancient, mediaeval and modern; in the past, present and future.

Gopalakrishna himself had said in one of his jottings: "All beings run a race to *Brahman*..... The true history of India relates to the dynasty of Brahman. Brahman rules from infinite to infinite, undisputed, absolute."

Prof. Mac Donnel, in his 'History of Sanskrit Literature' says: "This word (Brahman) is the very epitome of religious thought in India..... The two conceptions, *Atman* and *Brahman*, are commonly treated as synonymous in the Upanishads. But, strictly speaking, Brahman the older term, represents the cosmical principle; Atman the physical principle manifested in man; and the latter as the known is used to explain the former as the unknown."

Prof. Max-Muller says: "There is and there can be one reality only, whether we call it God, the Infinite, or the Absolute, the Unknowable, Brahman.

.....Whatever is, is one and the same in itself, without variableness or shadow of turning. And this is the Brahman."

Says Sree Aurabindo Ghosh: "Brahman is the self. All this verily is the Brahman (*Sarvam Khal-vidam Brahman*).

"Brahman is the giving; Brahman is the food—offering; by Brahman is it offered to the Brahman who is fire; Brahman is it which is to be attained by *Samadhi* in Brahman—action." (Gita)

"All being is the one Brahman, a divine movement of opening out from God and returning to God".

"Brahman is Son of Devaki;  
Brahman is the Slayer of Madhu;  
Brahman is Pundarikasha;  
Brahman bears the Garuda Flag.  
Brahman is Krishna....."(Sandhya)

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If *Brahman* has been the Ideal of India, its worshippers in life are verily the *Brahmins*.

It has been said that a *Brahmin* is he who **has** attained to Brahman—God-hood. But this view is erroneous, for, in that case, the aspirant becomes not a Brahmin, but Brahman itself—not a man, but God.

The other interpretation which Gopalakrishna himself favoured, is that every seeker after Brahman is a Brahmin. And in India, at any rate, as Brahman—God—is the goal of every body, therefore, all are *Brahmins*.

“The only word that can be found in the *Swa-sthi* (our National Anthem) is *Brahmin*..... The national prayer does indeed contain the mention of the name of the race or nation everywhere..... *Brahmin* is the word to describe our name..... Brahmin-hood has ever been an aspiration. A Brahmin is not he, as popularly declaimed, who attained to Brahman. In that case he lives in his own right. He gets above society. He sheds all <sup>संज्ञा</sup> (signs and names). But a Brahmin is he who aspires after Brahman. He retains his name until he achieves the end. Everybody can aspire after Brahman, and he whose conduct of life is so directed, can merit the name. The fond hope of the race has ever been to Brahmanise itself completely..... There were unmistakable evidences in our early historical traditions when thousands of others have been brought into Brahmin fold..... Even in modern times, in places where people professed the original faith, the aspiration still lingers. For instance, in Andhra and South there are those who call themselves “Deva Brahmanas” and “Viswa-Brahmanas” etc.....

“Even the oriental scholars (Europeans) of the days of the East India Company.....used to call our religion “Brahminism” “and our culture Brahmanical culture.” (Sadhana. 3).



AS AN EDINBURGH UNDERGRADUATE



“A name must be true, significant, historic, and beautiful.....Indeed there are already many *Brahmanas*,.....viz. *Deva Brahmanas*, *Viswa Brahmanas* etc. And if the new philosophy of life which should govern in future public and private relations in our society, must be the realisation of the fundamental oneness of all existence, the suitable name cannot but be ‘*Brahmin*’, for Srutis and Smritis alike declare that a ‘*Brahmin*’ is he who pursues this ideal. That is the traditional word.....” (Sadhana, 4).

“A seeker after Brahman (God) is a Brahmin”

బ్రహ్మ స్వేషకుఁడు బ్రాహ్మణుఁడు.

• • • • •

Brahmanism is the Religion of Brahmins, or of the worshippers of Brahman—i.e. of the people of India—nay of the world.

It is important to note here, however briefly, the origin of this *Brahmanism*.

The current theory of the Central Asian origin of all human civilization, according to which the original home of humanity was somewhere in Central Asia, and whence there were two streams, viz. the Eastern and the Western, seems to us to be unfounded; and equally discredited is Lokamanya Tilak's attempt to fix up the Home of the Vedas as still further North, i.e. in the Arctic regions. And, as a recent scholar so aptly put it, “Aryavarta is the original Home of the Aryans”, and of their scriptures too, including the Vedas.

Ancient Brahminical life as it was lived in the earliest Vedic ages, will be found embedded not only in the Vedas and the Brahmanas and Upanishads, but also described in great detail in the Srauta and *Grihya* Sutras, dealing respectively with the ritualism of great sacrifices and the ceremonies applicable to the domestic life of a man and his family from birth to the grave. And from these, it is just possible to form an idea of the sort of life led by and what is more important, prescribed to an average citizen of those days. (In India, a *Grihastha* or House-holder was the average 'citizen'; hence the great importance of *Grihya-sutras* or the laws of House-hold life).

The *Srauta* rites (*Srauta* is literally based on *Śruti*; and *Sutra* is a clue or thread) as described in the Srauta Sutras of a latter-day period, were fourteen, being divided into two groups of seven each, viz. *Havis* or oblations and soma-yagnas or sacrifices, which included the Agnihotra; *Darsa-Purna-masa*; *Chaturmasya*; *Agnistoma* (Praise of *Agni*); *Agni-Chayana* (piling up of the Fire-Altar lasting for a year); etc. They were all intended for the advanced followers of the Brahmin fold, and were always accompanied by three or more sacred fires, involving an elaborate ritualism and the functioning of several high priests and often lasting over long periods, sometimes even up to six years.

The *Grihya*, i.e. domestic ceremonies, on the other hand, which are described in the various *Grihya sutras* (laws of House-hold life), deal with the do-

mestic life of a man and his family, from birth to death, or even beyond the grave. For the performance of these rites, no elaborate priest-craft is needed; they are much simpler in ritualism; and only the domestic (*avasthya* or *vaivahika*) Fire was sufficient. Forty *Samskaras* or sacraments are described, as being performed at various epochs in man's life. "The first eighteen are bodily sacraments, from birth to marriage, and the remaining twenty-two are sacrifices. Eight of these, the five daily sacrifices (Maha-yagna, i.e. to Brahma, the Creator; to the *Pitris* or the Manes; to the Devas or Gods; to the Bhutas or the beings; and to *Athithis* or guests); and some other "baked offerings" i.e. *Paka-yagna*, form part of the Grihya ceremonies, the rest belonging to the Srauta ritual.

The first of these "domestic rites" is the *Pumsavanam* or ceremony aiming at the birth of a son. Then there are the *Jatakarma* or birth-rites; the *Nama-karma* or 'name-giving' (Two names were given, one being the secret name, known only to the parents and the other for common use); the *Chudakarma* (hair-dressing in the third year); and the *Upanayanam* or initiation; pilgrimage; marriage; funeral rites etc.

Of these, the *Upanayanam* (or "leading to the teacher") was the most important and means literally the additional or Third eye, which stands for spiritual insight and vision. Man, by birth, is a *Sudra*; but through *Upanayanam*, he is initiated into the mysteries of the Divine or higher knoweldge; and he



becomes the *Dwija*, the 'twice-born', because he has lost his former darkness, and is put into the Path of God—*Brahmacharyam*. The *Manu-Smriti* has an excellent description of the *Upanayanam*, from which the following is extracted.

“The Brahmin shall have his Upanayanam in his eighth year; the kshatriya in his eleventh; and the vysya in his twelfth (2. 36); but they may also take their initiation between the ages of 5 and 16; 6 and 21; and 8 and 24. The most precocious may take the earlier limit; but beyond the later limit, they become unfit for initiation and are, therefore, condemned by the wise (37—39). Among Brahmacharies, the Brahmin shall wear an *Upa-vitam* or cotton thread; the kshatriya, a hempen cord; and the vysya one made of goat's wool. Rules are prescribed for their dress; waist-belt or cord; hand-stick; and their *Bhiksha* or going the rounds for their daily food, and their mode of eating after surrendering it first to the teacher. For girls, marriage is the initiation sacrament; service to the husband is equivalent to the boy's living with the Guru; and the conduct of domestic duties to the ritual of the sacred fire (69). The Guru shall first teach his pupils cleanliness and *Acharam*, *Agnihotra* and *Sandhya* (69). The pupil shall begin and end his lessons with the recital of the sacred “Aum” (74), which is the sum-total of “ॐ, ॐ, ॐ the three letters respectively which commence the Rig, Yajur and Sama Vedas. Likewise, the creator Brahma, assorted three words from the three Vedas; and he who recites this *Rik* with that one word ‘Aum’

attains all the virtues of having read all the three Vedas (75—78). A *Dwija* who recites *Gayatri* a thousand times daily sheds all his sins, as a serpent leaves its outer skins (79). The *Savitri* with “Aum” constitutes the face of the Veda (81); and he who diligently worships the *Gayatri* for three years continuously, faces Brahma—he becomes Brahman himself (82).

“The one word “Aum”

Is supreme Brahma;

The control of Prana

Is greatest Tapas;

There is no Mantra,

Higher than *Savitri*;

To utter truth

Is higher than silence”. (83).

“The *Paka-yagnas* and *Vidhi-yagnas* are not worth a sixteenth part of *Gayatri*; the Brahmin, whether he does the yagnas or not, if he recites the *Gayatri*, then he is blessed (88). The Guru shall not give the *Gayatri* to an unworthy disciple; better it dies with him; never shall he sow its seeds on barren soil; for the goddess of knowledge shall lose her virility if bestowed upon the undeserving or the unfit (113—114). The *Dwija* was born first from the womb of his mother; but his second birth is in his Upanayanam: to him *Savitri* is the new Mother; the Acharya (Teacher) is the spiritual father (169-170). Till the Veda gives him his rebirth (through Upanayanam) a Brahmin is but a Sudra in

rank (172). The Brahmachary shall do these things (176); he shall not do those (177—181); he shall get flowers for worship and shall beg out his meal (183 sq.) and learn his lessons and live with his Guru in the prescribed manner (184—244). The pupil shall not offer any gifts to his Guru before he finishes his course; but after finishing it he shall ask for permission to marry and offer him whatever he (the Guru) wants (245). Lands or gold cows or horses, umbrella and shoes; seats or rice, fruits or clothes—these shall please the Guru much (246). If the Guru dies, the pupil shall serve the Guru's son or wife, or at least the fire-place where the Guru performed his 'homas' (248). The Brahmin who spends his Brahmacharyam thus wise, shall attain to the higher *Lokas*: he shall not be born again on this earth (249)

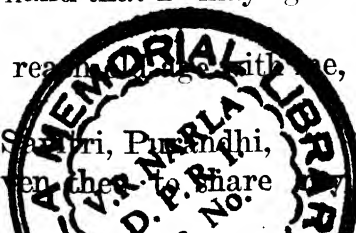
The sacrament of marriage, which even more than Upanayanam is the most important of these domestic rules is thus described. "The *Panigraha* or taking of her hand placed the bride in the power of her husband. The stone on which she stepped was to give her firmness. The several steps which she took with her husband and the sacrificial food which she shared with him were to inaugurate friendship and community. Future abundance and male offering were prognosticated when she had been conducted to her husband's house, by seating her on the hide of a red bull and placing upon her lap the son of a woman who had only borne living male children. The God most closely connected with the rite was Agni; for the husband led his bride three times

round the nuptial fire—*Parinaya* is “leading round”—and the newly kindled domestic fire was to accompany the couple throughout life. Offerings are made to it and Vedic formulas pronounced. After sunset, the husband leads out his bride, and as he points to the Pole-star and the star Arundhati, they exhort each other to be constant and undivided for ever.” (Prof. Mac Donnel).

“Permission to marry a daughter was asked from her father by the suitor through the mediation of an intimate friend. The wedding was celebrated in the house of the bride’s parents, whither the bridegroom, his relatives and friends came in procession. Here they were entertained with the flesh of cows slain in honour of the occasion. Here the bridegroom took the bride’s hand and led her round the nuptial fire; and on the conclusion of the wedding festivities, the bride, anointed and in festal array, mounted with her husband a car adorned with red flowers and drawn by two white bulls and conducted in a procession to her new house”. (Rig Vedic Marriage Rites).

The following marriage-hymns are from the Rig Veda:

To the Bride: “I grasp thy hand that I may gain  
good Fortune,  
“That thou mayst remain close with me,  
thy husband,  
Bhaga, Aryaman, Savitri, Purandhi,  
The Gods have given thee to share  
household.”



To Agni: "To Thee, O Agni, first they led  
Bright Surya with the bridal throng,  
So in thy turn to husbands give  
A wife along with progeny."

Benediction: "Here abide; be not divided;  
Complete life's whole allotted span;  
Playing with your sons and grand-sons;  
Rejoicing in your own abode."

Last stanza: "May all the Gods us unite,  
May waters now our hearts entwine,  
May Matariswan and Dhatri  
May Deshtri us together join". (Mac  
Donnel).

"The wife was subject to the will of the husband—was mistress (*Griha Patni*) of the house and participated in the offering of sacrifice. She controlled servants and slaves and also the unmarried brothers and sisters of her husband. In the Yajurveda it was customary for the sons and daughters to marry in the order of their ages, but the Rigveda more than once speaks of girls who remain unmarried and grew old in their fathers' house."

The husband should endeavour to please his wife and mate with her during the Ritu period, barring prohibited days; and he shall be deemed a Brahmachari (Manu 4.50). "Where the women are held in honour, there the gods are pleased; where they are not treated properly all the good deeds of the household will be of no avail"(4.56). Therefore, "Honour thy women with good clothes and jewels."

In the earliest Vedic times, social organisation was very much simple, because occupations were little differentiated; and every man was both a soldier and a civilian. But gradually society became more complex; vocations tended to become more numerous and hereditary; population spread over wider tracts of territory; and the religious ceremonial also was increasing in complexity, its success growing more dependent on correct performance. The priests had, therefore, to devote all their time and energies to the carrying out of their religious duties and the handing down of the sacred tradition in their families. Likewise, the necessity also arose for something in the nature of a standing army to repel sudden attacks or quell risings of the subjects; and the *nucleus* was supplied by the families of the chiefs of lesser tribes, which had amalgamated under some military leader. The agricultural and industrial sections of the population were thus left to follow their pursuits uninterrupted and thus gradually the three main classes of society became more and more separated an evidence of which we meet with, for the first time in the Rigveda, in the famous Hymn known as the '*Purusha Sukta*', where the Brahmin is said to have arisen from the face of the Brahman; Kshatriyas from the arms; Vaisya from the thighs; and Sudra from His feet. (x. 90).

The duties of the Brahmins were laid down by the law-givers and they were most trying and arduous. The highest of them was laid down by Manu thus: "In your own soul perceive the Supreme Soul

in all beings; and acquire a perfect equanimity of mind, towards them all." The Brahmin shall surrender even the Vedic rites of Yajna etc., if need be; but he shall endeavour always to realise himself through meditation, contemplation, sense-control, and Vedabhyasam: for these shall lead him surely unto *Moksham*" (12.92) "Realise the outer sky in the inner horizon of thy belly; in thine inner breath the outer *Vayu* (wind); in the lustre of thine eyes and the fire of thy stomach, those of the Sun and of *Agni*; in the internal waters of thy body the outer waters of the seas; the outer worlds in the inner; the moon in thy mind; the *disas* in thine ear; *Vishnu* in thy feet; *Hara* in thy strength; *Agni* in thy speech; *Mitra* in thy *Payu*; and *Prajapati* in thine *Upastha*".

The life of a Brahmin is divided into four stages or *Ashramams*, viz., the Brahmacharya or the period of study under the Guru; the Grihastha or the householder's life; the Vanaprastha or anchorite's retirement; and Sanyasa or the life of a religious mendicant. Each of these stages, again, had clearly defined and well-regulated rules of conduct and each is graduated not only to fulfill its own purpose, but to lead gradually on into the next, and the whole life is thus prescribed as a steady progress towards the attainment of *Mukti*, or the perfect identity of the one with the indivisible, eternal, Brahman.

And what is *Mukti* or *Moksham*?

Says the *Sarva-Saropanishad*: *Moksha* is freedom from Bondage (*Bandha*).

But what is Bondage?

The same Upanishad defines Bondage in these words: "There are the Spirit or the Soul (*Atma*) and the body (*Deham*) which is non-spirit. And Bondage is that which imagines the body (which is not self) as the Self, and loves it as such; and thereby brings on error to the soul."

The Kshatriya, Vysya, and the Sudra each manifesting a different type of human aspiration and endeavour, formed with the Brahmin the four sides of the Indian Society: and the whole scheme, according to Sree Krishna, the latest of the great *Avatars*, was based on the principle of *Guna* (inner quality) and *Karma* (outer action) of each *Jeeva* (individual).

Such is the system which flourished in India for ages and ages; and gradually it spread across the length and breadth of the Indian continent, making conquest after conquest, and adding power and glory to the kingdom of God or Brahman, as well as its worshippers. But, in course of time, about two thousand and five hundred years ago, we find, the evening of Brahmanism had set in; Brahmins had become deteriorated in calibre and culture; social purity declined; and men became selfish and women ignorant. And out of these conditions there arose a Protestant form of India's Religion, known as Buddhism or the Religion of the enlightened from its founder Gautama Buddha, or Gautama, the Illumined.



## CHAPTER XIII.

## Decay of Brahmanism.

The system which thus arose and grew up in India through ages became corrupt and degenerated in course of time; and the chief causes which led to it were the arrogance and tyranny of the priestly class; and the vanity and increasing imbecility of the monarchs who had till then stood as the champions of *Dharma* and Protectors of the Faith. Among other causes which led to this decay of Brahmanism in India were the growing superstition and unmeaning ritualism, due to the inner lights of wisdom getting dim; the sufferings of women and the sudras, from both of whom the Light was denied; and a growing oppression coupled with the most debased hypocrisy on the part of the caste-system, which was proving tyrannical in the extreme, particularly upon the *Chhandalas*, who were originally outcastes, and are to this day the most condemned part of our society, constituting as they do the untouchables, unapproachables and even the unseeables by birth!

To rectify the disorders of this sort of spiritual famine, there arose about two thousand five hundred years ago a protestant movement which set up a vigorous and effective critic against the corrupt and monopolistic tendencies of the Brahmin priests and their henchmen in society; and the leader of this movement was the great Gautama Buddha, the last of the Buddhas, who, at the age of twenty eight, re-

nounced his young wife, child and his kingdom in search of Truth; and after long and strenuous efforts, saw the Light dawning upon him and he thereafter became the enlightened one. From that time onward, the great Buddha with the help of a few devoted disciples, preached the tenets of a new Religion, which played a very important part in the history of India and which, to this day claims forty-five crores of souls in its fold, though it has long since ceased to be a religious system in the land of its birth. The faith started at first with a few; but it soon spread, making disciples, conquering monarchs, and during the reign of Asoka Maurya, it became the State Religion of India and began also to spread to outer kingdoms; and in a couple of centuries more, through the zeal of the Emperors and the devoted labours of the monks, it spread throughout Tibet, China, Burma, Malaya, Korea, Japan and Central Asia and captured the hearts of their peoples; and it even largely influenced, through Philosophy and fable, the Religion of Christ which rose in Palestine and spread to the West. Thus for a thousand years and more, India became the holy-land of an intensely Buddhistic and Enlightened East as may be witnessed from the streams of pious pilgrims who poured forth from China and other countries to India, of whom Fahien and Hiuntsang are the most famous.

Buddhism was, indeed the Protestantism of India's Religion; but, like all such Protestant forms, it served only as a reaction, not as an integral synthesis. Like the Gandhian fires of our recent times

Buddhism, indeed, could supply the moral heat of love and purity to a society seething with hate, hypocrisy and irreligion; but, like all other fires, the ethical fire of Buddhism also proved in the long-run, self-scorching. The great Act of Buddhistic Renunciation, instead of conserving the ancient elements of strength and power in the original and deeply-rooted systems of the land, had, in the hands mostly of the latter-day followers of the Faith, tried to destroy the main-springs of the ancient Faith Itself; and gradually the very structure of the Brahmanical Religion-Philosophy-Society was submerged, nay the very words of Brahman and Brahmin had become obsolete in India by the 6th century A.D. (Christ); or, wherever still lingering, were suffering from an insurmountable ignorance on the one hand and a terrible persecution at the hands of the Buddhistic kings and adherents on the other. Thus, in course of time, Buddhism in India began to decline and to correct it of its errors and to restart the Nation on its great and original path of Brahmana Dharma, there arose in India a powerful reformer in the person of Sree Sankaracharya (788 to 820 A.D. Christ) who, before he reached the age of 32, performed feats of a prodigee not only in matters of intellectual thought and Philosophy, but even in outer material organisation also, and setting himself to a vigorous re-shaping of the existing Law, Society, Ethics, Philosophy of the land took back Hinduism to the original Idea of the one, Indivisible, Immutable Brahman; restated the Gospel of Adwaitam in his commentaries of the *Brahma Sutras*; trained disciples and founded *Mutts* or

monasteries on the principle of *Sannyasa*; and in a wonderfully short time reconverted whole masses of mankind from the Buddhistic to the Brahminical fold. Since the days of the ancient seers, in fact, there was none who, by his purity of character, forcefulness of personality, brilliance of intellect, capacity for organisation, and, above all, an adamant will and purpose to reshape society on the laws and principles of Sanatana Dharma, could compare with the great Sankaracharya, and it is no wonder that he moved in the land like a tempest, and swept it off its anaemia.

To understand the true inwardness of the great work that Sankara did, it is necessary to remember that not only he lived—like Gopalakrishna—for only a very brief life-time, but that the times then were much different from ours. India, we must remember, is a land of great distances; and in those days, there were no steamships or aeroplanes, no railways or motor cars, no canals or good roads even, and the major journeying had to be done mostly on foot and across pathless jungle and woods. Then again, the country was not even politically one, there having been several kingdoms and sub-kingdoms, following different creeds of worship, and most of them paying homage to the Buddhistic cult. Under such conditions, that Sankara could cover the North and South, East and West,—in fact, his institutions still exist in such widely separated areas like Sringeri and Puri, Dvaraka, and Badarinath—but that in every place, wherever he went, he could inflict crushing defeats on the elite of the existing religious

orders in many a distinguished combat; and thereby conquer priests, conquer kings, conquer peoples, nay conquer whole kingdoms to a new Brahmanical Faith, which was new—because it was entirely different from the existing Buddhistic order—yet old—because it was based fundamentally on the ancient *Brahman* Ideal, which the precepts of Buddhism had largely helped to disintegrate;—and founded a number of Mutts or ecclesiastical institutions which were to cater to and take charge of that new Faith—all within the span of thirty two years;—this must really sound a miracle.

The basis of Sankara's work is briefly told. His was not a negative and pessimistic nihilism, but, while accepting the relative unreality of the world, he yet realised the grandeur of the pre-Buddhistic doctrines of Religion and Philosophy and revived the Upanishadic traditions of the *Brahman* particularly the Gospel of Vedanta, which had long been slumbering under the benumbing forces of Buddhistic ethicism and sunyavada. Thus, with the faith of a positive Brahman in his heart, Sankara sought to revive the heritage of past ages, by applying its knowledge to the every-day life of the society around him, through an acceptance of that society as it came to him, and ever endeavouring to transcend it so as to reach ultimately that fundamental oneness, which has been known as Adwaitam.

Thus while Buddhism stood for the impermanence of all existing things, including kingdoms, riches, family, children, even caste—and prescribed

the cult of the shaven head, the yellow robe, begging bowl, ascetic life, continence, poverty, non-killing and lonely living in groves and forests, and emphasised on the doctrine of rooting out all *Karma* or actions in order to attain *Nirvana*, Sankara admitting the ultimate unreality of the world, still laid his emphasis on a new acceptance of Life as it was,—with its palaces and forts; kings and kingdoms; castes, divisions; riches, poverty; killing, non-killing; temples and idols etc., and, while reserving to himself and to his followers the fires of an ascetic life, he looked upon the rest of the humanity with a more humane and less unsympathetic gaze than his more puritanic forbears, and by throwing open the gates of Brahman to all who cared to enter its portals, he resuscitated the glories of Brahmanism and set it on a living and growing path.

Sankara's work has been criticised on two essential respects. Firstly, that he was responsible for the doctrine of the *Maya Vada* or the Illusory Theory of the Universe; and secondly, that he set up and perpetuated the society of castes and endless divisions of the caste and the sub-caste principle. In both these respects, it is necessary to remember that Sankar's work has been misunderstood.

Sankara, indeed, was the master-mystic of the Indian middle-ages; and, none else had expounded not only by the stern austerity of his conduct, but by his fiery and poetic utterances, the utter ephemerality of this world, as compared with the glorious worlds of Brahman as Sree Sankara did. Thus he describes Him, the *Sad Guru* as:

“Beginningless, Endless,  
 Without even a Middle;  
 Sans hands or feet;  
 Sans name or Gotram;  
 Without race, without caste;  
 Neither male nor female,  
 Nor even neutral neuter,  
 Neither beautiful nor ugly;  
 Free from birth, free from death;  
 Beyond reach of virtue or sin;  
 One who is the only one;  
 The self-effulgent Harmony!”

Elsewhere he describes this world as “wretched”  
 జ గ త్తు చ్చ నే త త్ and condemns this Earth,  
 its elements, this body, even the gods and scriptures  
 to the limbo of oblivion: and to quote one more  
 verse,

“Neither this Earth nor Water,  
 Nor the Light nor Air, nor the Akas,  
 Neither a combination of all of these,  
 None of them *Is*.....  
 Neither *Veda* nor *Yajna*,  
 Nor *Thirtha* nor Gods or Religion,  
 None availeth.....”

This Maya-Vada or the theory of the relative  
 unreality of this world has not only stood out as a  
 prominent part of his teachings, but especially at the  
 hands of his lesser followers, it has acquired an im-  
 portance and hold in the minds of the Indian people,  
 which resigns them to anything in life:—to slavery

or worse: for "This world is unreal; these kings are unreal; these kingdoms are but passing shows; then why bother about this *Midhya*—this non-existent mirage? " Or as the Bhagavatham puts it:

"Have not kings been?  
 Have not kingdoms shone?  
 Have they not reached the summit of their  
 pride?  
 Where are they now?  
 Have they carried with them  
 Any wealth from this earth?  
 Are their names at least remembered now?  
*Sibi* and all his kin,  
 Where are they?  
 Their name and fame?  
 "Wife is death;  
 Relations are the death-gods;  
 Those that come to thee for service,  
 They are thine enemies;  
 This *Samsara* is a hoax;  
 This life is most transient.  
 "Relatives are thieves;  
 Sons are our creditors;  
 Women are the cause  
 Of all our woes;  
 This wealth is fleeting;  
 This body is transient;  
 Time, life and wealth;  
 All go but quickly....."

But Sankara's *Maya-Vada* was not only an accidental and circumstantial necessity to him, being the



tradition bequeathed in an over-whelming degree by the philosophy of the Buddhistic age which had just preceded him, but chiefly, it represents the negative aspect of his burning love for a positive, creative, all-absorbing Brahman, before which, indeed, all else was unreal. But his critics often forget that Brahman and remember only the unreality which Sankara condemned in no measured terms!

The charge against Sankara's *Varnashrama Dharma* or Division of Society into multiple castes is likewise a mistaken one; and, in view of its great importance to the story of Gopalakrishna, it has got to be noticed in some detail.

*Adwaitam* or the fundamental oneness of all existence, it is admitted, is the greatest positive contribution of Sree Sankaracharya; but, it is contended that his synthesis is largely diluted by his revival of the *Varnashrama Dharma* or the Rule of the caste system, and his *Shanmata-Sthapana*, or the founding of the six systems of worship which had been doubtless existing for a long time before, but which, since his days took a firmer root, and now seems well-nigh unshakable in this country.

This problem of the conflict between oneness and division is as old at least as the hills, and, in one form or another, now as capitalism, now as communism, now as autocracy, now as aristocracy, is raging everywhere and tearing society to pieces. But apart from it, the discrepancy between Sankara's theory and practice of *Adwaitam* is not so real as

his critics often urge us to believe; nor is his Adwaita Dharma merely a subjective dream-state without a corresponding correlation to Life, as our book-men and pedants want us implicitly to believe.

Thus Sankara's emphasis on the division of society in our practical conduct was merely an acceptance of life and things as they came to him in that age; and, as a practical reformer, he simply took them up, with all their limitations and filled them all with the glory of an Adwaitic Philosophy and dogma. For instance, if we exemplify his Ideal as the Matriculation of our society, he found that all of them were not fit to sit in the Matric class, or much less pass the test of that initiation; and a number of classes, the 1st; 2nd; 3rd and so forth had to be formed, more or less on the existing models, and courses were prescribed to receive pupils of varied fitness into them and, what is more important, *to prepare them all for sitting up for the Matric*, at some future time, if not immediately. We cannot have in a school all the boys in the Matric class, *i.e.*, to say, all of them at once; though the idea at every stage of the course will of course be to train each pupil to the level of the Matriculation Ideal, but every one is not fit enough for it today. It is a hard and invincible fact, which it is well we remember at the very start. And hence, too, arises the need for classes and forms. But otherwise, there is or ought to be, at any rate, no rigid division in principle between class and class; the school is one and the same; the aim throughout is to train the people for the Matriculation Ideal; and, above all, the Ideal to reach is one, *viz.*, the

Ideal of Brahman or God. Sankara's acceptance of the Varnasrama Dharma was thus a graduated method in the process of the Brahmanization of the world; or, in other words, his division was not an absolute and cut-and-dry breaking up, which, in the long-run, destroys the very sap of the tree itself: on the contrary, it is an organic grouping or branching off rather, which under the varied fitness of the race, was necessary in order to prepare that society to reach the Ideal of Oneness which was the nearest and dearest Ideal of his heart.

And like-wise Sankara's creed of the fundamental oneness of the world without any distinction of caste, creed, race and sex is not merely a subjective half-truth to be meticulously read in our text-books and gullibly devoured by an ignorant and believing people for ever, but it has got its corresponding correlation to our outward life also, as was evidenced, in his own life-time by his meeting with the Chandala on the Ganges shore. What the exact nature of this relation of our objective religion to the great subjective Truth of an indivisible, Eternal Brahman in our present age is, remains, indeed, still to be discovered; and, among our recent thinkers, it has fallen to the lot of our Gopalakrishna to discover and proclaim that social synthesis which, at present, is such a crying need in the world.

The application of God or Brahman to Life,—or, what is the same thing, the Brahmanization of the world,—yes, of the entire world,—of the Brahmin

world, of the non-Brahmin world; of the Hindu world, of the Islamic world; of the Buddhist world, of the Christian world; of the Eastern world, of the Western world; the raising of the whole and entire world without exception of race or clime, creed or dogma, to the level of a divine Oneness,—this was the Message of Gopalakrishna; and, after Sree Sankaracharya nothing so grand and heroic has ever been dreamt of, in this country. And, verily, what Gopalakrishna preached was a sort of *Sankarisation of the world!*

This is not the place to expatiate more upon that message; and, for the present, we must stop this story of India's Religion with only one more point, viz. that, after Sankara's time, the principle of a really social democracy based on God has, chiefly owing to his teachings, as well as through the endeavours of a host of other *Acharyas* (teachers) in India as well as owing to the coming of Islam and Christianity into the land, percolated the entire strata and even the sub-strata of our society; and underneath the jarring conflict of modern disintegration, we will find a substratum of the divine Truth, a knowledge of our fundamental oneness, a consciousness of the *Adwaitam*, not meekly acquiesced or blindly believed in, but deliberately inculcated and consciously developed; slumbering may be just now and lying ineffectual; but, under better auspices and under more proper and wiser direction, awaiting the grandest accomplishment, nay, constituting the only hope for the future of an erring, erratic, starving, struggling humanity in India, nay in the entire world.

Thus, look at any part of our society—high, middle or low; philosophic, intellectual, untutored; male, female and neuter; high caste, low caste, even the out-caste;— and everywhere we will find the true notes of an inner Harmony behind all the rough and tumble—a grand synthesis beneath all the forces of an outer conflict of our divisions through caste, race, language, ritual, dogma, religion. And thus the Brahmin prays thrice daily:

“Just as the waters from the skies falling in  
different places

All run to join the one sea;

So the salutations to the thousand Gods whom  
people worship,

All go to the same ultimate Godhood”.

“Siva and Vishnu are different only in name;

The form of the one is not different from that of  
the other;

Nay, their very hearts are one”.

“The same Vasudeva lives in all the three  
worlds,

To Him who lives in all beings, I bow”.

The sameness of the soul which exists in the pundit and the dog, not to speak of the under-dog of our society, viz. the Chhandala, is a classical text in the *Gita*; and our ballad and folk-lore, story, song and epic, philosophy and ritualism, all are based on this spirit of Fundamental Unity—“All is full of

Ramachandra", "All that exists is God"; "Thou art That"; "I am He" etc., and a child in India will tell you that the same soul, the same God lives in all—in you and in me, in him and in her, in this and in that, in man and in beast, in plant and even in the metal and stone.

Thus the classical Child Prahlada of the *Mahabhagavatam*, confronted with the query 'Where is God?' coolly replies:

"Doubt not, Oh! Father,  
That He is here or that He is not there;  
For wheresoever thou seekest for Him,  
There shalt thou find Him, and without fail".

And the agnostic father, so the story goes, took the sword in hand and struck at the neighbouring pillar; and in a trice jumps out the Terrible Lord, red in tooth and claw, half-Lion and half-Man, to tear the wicked to pieces and bless the merciful!

The existence of the one, indivisible divine spirit, running across the inner veins and arteries of our life-systems is a cardinal feature of every Indian faith; and it is our great capital asset, on the foundation of which the future structure of the World-Commonweal has got to be built up in the new age. It has all along been slumbering or lying idle; but the time for "commencement of business", to quote a business phrase, has arrived; and, as the human instrument, our Gopalakrishna has "sounded the Gong and summoned the faithful" for a common social embrace or comradeship in India. And the story of Gopalakrishna in the latter part of his life is the story of that Gong and of that summoning.

## CHAPTER XIV.

## Post-Jail Utterances.

During the last three chapters, we have described the message of Gopalakrishna, as uttered from the jail-mouth; and with a view to give a clearer understanding of the nature and circumstances of that message, we sketched out at some length the story of our ancient, yet eternal Religion, known as Brahmanism. Brahmanism, as conceived by our sages and saints, is a Universal Religion; and it applies not to this country or that race; but widens its scope with the widening of our mental horizon. It is the message of our hills and rivers, of our scriptures and of our saints; and its ultimate range is the Infinitude Itself. It is the message which India awaits to deliver to the world; and which the world is anxiously awaiting to receive from India. And in the giving of an effective and practical turn to the state of things as existing at present, which is undoubtedly the most critical not only of our, but even of the world's history, lies the secret of Gopalakrishna's service to humanity. The full extent of that service cannot properly be gauged at this stage, nor probably is this the place to speak at any further length about it. We may advert to it again at the end of our story; but in the meanwhile we should go back to our main narrative of his life during the six remaining years which were all that were left to him after he came out of jail.

Gopalakrishna, we have already seen, was released from the Trichinopoly Jail at 12-45 noon on

the 2nd Day of October 1922. A message to the 'Swarajya' relating thereto reads thus: "All leaders including Messrs. C. Rajagopalachary, V. V. S. Iyer, Dr. Sankarier, E. V. Ramaswamy Naicker, K. Santhanam, and S. Ramanathan were present at the entrance and garlanded the patriot. He was taken in a procession, followed by a band of volunteers. A huge mass meeting was held in the meeting in front of the Town Hall. Moulvi Syed Murtuza Saheb presided. His future work will be to remove the inequality among the various divisions of the Hindu community and to ameliorate and elevate the condition of the depressed classes".

This short message gives us the clue to Gopalakrishna's activities immediately after his release from jail. Trichinopoly is the biggest city of the South, being second only to Madras, and is situated in the heart of Tamil culture and civilization and promises to be the capital of the Tamil Nadu. Gopalakrishna was the gem not only of the Andhra Province, but, as the President of the Sreerangam meeting said, of the whole of India; therefore, the elite of the Tamil land were present at the jail-gate to greet the out-coming of this new Sun of the Indian firmament. He must have been accompanied by his European jail-superintendent, whom he described as "a perfect gentleman", and whom he proposed for his exemplary conduct to make the Inspector-General of Prisons "when they had Swaraj."

Gopalakrishna delivered three speeches before he came back to Andhra. The first was at Trichino-



poly on the day of his release; the second was at Sreerangam, where there is the famous Temple of Sree Ranganadhaswamy, which he visited the next morning; and the third was the great Soundarya Mahal speech at Madras on the evening of the 4th, October. Being the first utterances in his Freedom, they are all important, but unfortunately we have no full reports of any, except of the last, even which is merely a translation of the original Telugu in which he spoke. Owing to their importance, alike for a knowledge of his inner mind at this period as for enabling us to follow his future career, we shall give here some, though brief, idea of his utterances and actions. It need hardly be added that, in all these places he was presented with eloquent and eulogistic addresses from the public.

While at Trichinopoly, he was welcomed by the late Mr. P.T. Sreenivasa Iyengar, M.A., who was a great man of culture and who was then Professor in the Training College there. Mr. Iyengar was a great lover of hand-sticks; and, it is said, he used to stock several of them of the richest variety. On the occasion of Gopalakrishna's visit, Mr. Iyengar made a present of one "black-coloured", though not perhaps a "red-eyed" *Dandam*. It was a recognition of the greatness of Gopalakrishna's culture by an eminent man of culture of South India. Gopalakrishna bore it for a couple of years with great pride,—it was really a strong and lovely hand-stick, evidently the best in Mr. Iyengar's stock,—and ordinary folks used to imagine that it had magical powers! And perhaps it had! For he was all power when he had that stick with him; but when he gave it for some

improvements to some Engineer in 1926, and the latter cut it into two not only Gopalakrishna got his fatal illness, but even the poor Engineer verily lost his job and, to this day, is in troubles! We do not mean to suggest that there is any connection between the three; but, at least, the coincidence is remarkable, and, any way Gopalakrishna lost a great hand-stick, which, as a gift of culture to culture, would have passed on to posterity as a relic.

According to a report in the 'Hindu', Gopalakrishna spoke at Trichinopoly in a humorous vein for about two hours. He began by explaining the greatness of Sree Ramachandra and the sacredness attached to the uttering of the *Rama-Nam*. It was usual for him on rising to speak, to utter a prayer and make the audience also say in chorus: "*Sreemad Rama Ramana-Govindo Harih!*" It was a characteristic Indian way and evidently was intended to purify the minds of the hearers and prepare them for the rest of the performance. It is remarkable how effectively, as a *Mantra* the slogan served for putting most riotous meetings into good humour,—for it subdued the egotism of the crowds; and, in fact, the very words "*Sreemad Rama Ramana Govindo Harih*" in those days used to remind one of Gopalakrishna.

The national idiom of Self-expression, he began, in the matter of *Upanyasam* (or Lecture) was *Hari-katha*; so he apologised for indulging in such a *katha* or performance that evening. Our present day meetings and speeches, he used to say, are all based upon

an imitatory principle of the Western pulpiteering and Parliamentarianism; but we, in India, have had our own culture and civilization, which are now forgotten. He therefore, aimed in this and in many other things constantly to revive the glories of ancient India, which are all buried in our books.

“He thanked the public of Trichinopoly for presenting him with an Address. They had said very kind things about him which he did not deserve. He was just as bad as they all were. The Tamilnadu had sent hundreds of them to jail, and he was just like one of them.

“When people were released from jail, they were congratulated in the belief that they had undergone terrible trials. Jail-life was not so very bad as they had imagined. He knew the secret of it..... Jail-life was infinitely superior to that which they were living outside. They might all run up there, and they had a very fine jail there. The Superintendent is a perfect gentleman, although he had been very unkind to me.....He was only a wheel in the machine.....They required a little of iron in them to go to jail and although every human being contained iron, unfortunately, they were iron filings; some were very soft, there was pig iron also. The process of getting ‘steeled’ was going to jails.

“Our people had endured slavery for centuries. For the last two thousand years, Hindus had been slaves; Muhammadans lost their ruling capacity a few hundred years back; and the Sikhs very recently.

That was why the Sikhs were able to put up a very strong fight (in their Gurukha Bag affair). The miserable plight of their country was due to their own *Karma*, the result of their own activities and not to any external agency.

“He certainly loved the English people, because he was in England for five years and he knew they were superior to us in every respect. It was a simple proposition, otherwise they would not rule us from 6000 miles away.....He did not mind the British ruling the land if they worked themselves into our society. They ought not to have *any hatred towards the British; if they had, they had no right to participate in public life.*

“Many members were not wanted for the Non-cooperation movement. They wanted very few who could face the guns. There was no use of sentimentality. They had better think two million times before taking a leap. It did not matter even if they had only five or ten non-cooperators. It did not matter if there were ten in the whole of India. One Mahatma Gandhi was really capable of bringing round such a wonderful moral and spiritual revolution in our land, because the spiritual forces radiating from that concentrated centre called Gandhi reached every centre represented by human beings.....That one individual was enough. He was having his *Sadhana* (in the Yerravada jail), and we will have his *Siddhi*.

Chirala-Perala and Gurukhabag\* seemed to him

\* A garden in the Punjab, sacred to the Sikhs.

to be the two spots chosen by Providence to demonstrate the power of His Leela to herald the new idea of Life that was going to rule the world in future. ....In Gurukhabag, it was primarily a religious affair; in Chirala, it was a municipal affair—a political affair.....The scene in Gurukhabag was laid in a garden.....in Chirala it was absolute arid sands. Three miles away from Chirala-Perala, for eleven months twenty thousand people lived on the sands. Now it was the garden of Allah! It had its own grandeur: everything was the work of the divine Artist! In Gurukhabag, 4000 people participated: in Chirala 20,000. Men women and children, Hindus—with all their discordant divisions,—Musalmans, untouchables, everybody of course participated. ....Just imagine palatial buildings being abandoned to the devil and the inmates running away to the sands three miles off!.....

“During the eleven months there was no Municipality in Chirala, they had their own Committees ruling. To organise self-government in a village which consisted of so many communities they had to keep aside democracy lest it should degenerate into mobocracy. In Chirala they had thirty communities, each being represented on the Committee.....

“The struggle in Gurukhabag went on for fourteen days; and in Chirala for eleven months. Chirala was supposed to have failed in the language of the market-place.

“Why Chirala failed and Gurukhabag succeeded was that ever since they started the Chirala affair, the leaders—all honour to them—honour for their valour and death for their ambition—they had suffered and sacrificed, but they exhibited indecision and want of self-confidence—Every one used to tell him that they had launched on Civil Disobedience when they had not even given up the Courts and they had no Charka in their homes!

“He thought that, by driving the thin end of the wedge, by inducing the townsmen to support civil disobedience with respect to a municipality which had been despised by everybody, he would create an atmosphere, mental and moral, in which each and everyone of them might gradually reform himself.

“To deal with 20,000 credulous people of low moral level and to keep them in unity, to make their hearts one, was an experiment in mass psychology. It had given them great discipline and it was due to Mahathma Gandhi and to me, so far as I represented and understood that great man.....

“Except Mr. S. Sreenivasa Iyengar, who promised to be one of our great leaders, none came there. No C.F. Andrews, no Malaviyaji came to Chirala. No Congress Committee came to enquire into their condition and, inspite of one of their leaders Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya, the Congress ultimately gave Rs. 3,000! He had personally collected Rs. 10,000 for Chirala. The merchants used to manage everything else.

“The leaders began to grow nervous..... They were amateurs in the game. They did not know how to educate the masses. They did not know that when they put their finger on the one sensitive point in the moral and mental constitution, it had its effect on each and every form. Every aspect, religion and politics was intertwined. In both cases, the success was only moral so far, and they had to carry on to achieve material success. The Akalis would carry on, they had leaders who knew how to deal with the masses, who knew that mass education had to be worked up by pressing local grievances which could rally the people. They knew it in Gurukhabag. But here they did not know it. And for a long time the Andhras used to take orders from the North in Congress matters. They lacked self-confidence.

“Mahatma Gandhi shouldered responsibility which perhaps would visit him with hanging some day. Gandhiji expected the possibility of facing the British guns, while he and they would not: that was the whole secret. They need not be ashamed to own that they lacked the sense of responsibility. The Non-cooperation movement was a movement of self-purification. It did not matter if they did not get Swaraj. Let them try to purify themselves to have confidence, to become brave in shouldering responsibility, and discharging it to the point of death. That was one of the most important results of the campaign.

“*And, secondly, Religion must reinforce Politics.....* One year of political work had shown us

that social inequalities should be removed. Mahatma had suggested the removal of untouchability to remove all these obstacles.....There was no such thing as the 'Hindu' Religion. That name was given them by their masters and accepted by them as slaves. In jail, the Christians had their prayers on Sundays, and the Mohammadans congregated on Fridays. 'Hindus' had nothing. The different divisions among the Hindus were necessary when the Aryans first came. There was now no marked racial difference in the people inhabiting this country. He did not think that there were any in this land to whom the Vedas could be denied. Sankara preached *Adwaitam* in his days. But unfortunately, he was not spared to work out moral philosophy and reform social institutions. Mahatma Gandhi had come to fulfill Sankara's mission. Unity was the one essential thing. This was the proper time for a new *Smriti* based on Vedanta, which he proposed to bring into existence for regulating the changed conditions of the world. There was no use of other reform in such a rotten society. He had hopes that, in Andhradesa, they would completely eliminate the social inequity in the Hindu community in one year. Spiritual equality when translated into political life, was democracy. Nonviolence was the Law of Life, the revelation of Mahatma Gandhi. The sutram of Gandhiji is that we should create a new *Smriti*. The Pundits of the present day were mere gramophones: they could not enjoy the music that they produced. Non-Brahmins were right in working a crusade against Brahmins: but he could not understand their alliance with the bureaucracy. He was one with them



in crying down the Brahmin. There were no Brahmins worth the name in this country.

“Chirala was a rehearsal. The less we talk of Civil Disobedience and Council Entry, the better. *I have made up my mind to work up a new Smriti and recast Hindu society according to modern needs. That is my mission in life, to which I will dedicate myself.*

## CHAPTER XV.

## Hymn to Sree Ranganadha.

From Trichinopoly, Gopalakrishna proceeded to Sreerangam, where there is the famous temple of Sree Ranganadha, on the shores of the Cauvery River, and after a purifying river-bath, he entered the Holy Presence in due religious manner—his knowledge of the correct religious methods and his punctilious observance thereof are well-known—and made obeisance to the Lord, in whose praise he composed a famous Hymn and recited it extempore. The verses are in Sanskrit and are remarkable for their spontaneity, wit, depth of thought, culture and high poetic beauty. Just after his return from the temple, he attended a meeting, where he delivered a speech from which the following are extracts.

“Brothers, It is 9 o’clock A.M. We ought to be plying the Charka now! That is what to do in this Gandhian era. Though we pretend life, we are not living. If we were living, we should have worn khadi. The British Government and their agents are laughing in their sleeves that we Indians do not even wear khadi.....Some people ask ‘How are you going to get Swaraj by khadi?’ Those people do not understand the meaning of khadi. Mahatmaji presented a didactical contrivance. When you put on khaddar, you must go only to holy places. You will then be a Bhakta; and so gradually it will begin scorching the accumulated crusts of slavery. It is the thin end of the wedge—the first stage in *karmamukti*.

“Economics is the order of appropriation of things. When you appropriate a thing, you want to consume it. Consumption is change of name and form, because matter is indestructible. When you are aiming at something, you are decreeing its death. When the world is in an economic mood, it betokens the death of a Yuga!”

After detailing the need for a socio-religious programme he concluded: “I now call upon you to concentrate on this work of annihilating social inequity and inequality as a necessary condition to Swaraj and everything”.

The Chairman of the meeting, in his concluding remarks,—paid a glowing tribute to the speaker and called him “Bharata-Ratna” and not merely “Andhra-Ratna”; and he thanked him on behalf of them all.

The Hymn to Sree Ranganadha contains nine *Slokas* in Sanskrit, of which the following is a free rendering into the poor English language. Needless to add that the many precious literary gems and beauties abounding therein are untranslatable, and we shall confine ourselves to its more general sense.

1. “Washed by the holy waters of the Cauvery,  
Srirangam is in the heart of the Tamil land,  
Whose hospitality I have enjoyed for nigh an  
year,  
And on my way to my native home, Oh! Lord,  
Let me pause awhile on this day of my freedom  
And tell you the tale of the state of Thy kingdom.

2. "Oh! Ranganadha!

Lying on the downy bed of the serpent-heads,  
On the crested waves of Thy aqueous Essence,  
Enjoying the Bliss of Harmony of Thy Uni-  
verse,

Oh! Lord of the Tamil race!

Bless me awhile,

And give me a hearing.

3. "Oh! Thou the Merciful One,

Who art the Chancellor of the Tamil land,  
And art immersed in the deep sleep of Immor-  
tal Beatitude

Of Thine own Universal Soul,

Let me interrupt you a minute,

Oh! Ranganadha, Awake, awhile!

And introduce myself.

"Lord! In your former Birth,

At the end of the second age of this Universal  
History,

You had come in the guise of Sree Ramachandra

And trod with infinite love,

On our blessed Andhra land.

I am that Andhra:

*Andhroham'*

I have come to tell Thee

The tale of Thy woes.

4. "In days of yore,

While the East was indifferent to its Dharma,

And the lands were in famine,

And the kings were quarrelling among them-  
selves,

And the hardy Muslims were putting to sword  
 the lives of many a native son of the soil;  
 And the crest of the pride of the great Andhra  
 kings of Vijayanagar fame was fallen;  
 Then came the Englishmen into our land,  
 In the guise of a trading firm,  
 Under plea of quiet trade,  
 But with tricks of a more terrible import at  
 bottom.

5. "Those men,  
 Belonging to a little Isle on the Western End of  
 Europe,  
 Have spread to the ten sides,  
 And reached the corners of different continents  
 And built up an Empire  
 On which 'the sun never sets'.  
 Such is their pride, Oh! Lord,  
 So vast, really, is its extent,  
 And all this happened, Lord,  
 While you were immersed in *Yoga-Nidra*—In  
 your divine Sleep—  
 And their conquest included Thine entire *Bha-*  
*rata Varsha*!
6. Commencing their career as a trading corpora-  
 tion,  
 These people gradually pierced the entire land,  
 And making use of the five tricks of the trade  
 Picked up quarrels with the ruling kings, one by  
 one,  
 And steadily established their Rule  
 From the cold Himalayas in the North  
 To the distant sea in the South;  
 And all Thy lovely land is now theirs!

7. "The result of this change, my Lord!  
Is famine, pestilence and irreligion;  
Alien culture, outlandish education;  
Taxes on cattle, water, fruit-trees and on stones,  
Oppressive land-tax and even tax on simple salt;  
Decrepit bodies, degenerate hearts;  
Perpetual slumber, eternal Poverty;
  
8. "An end to the ancient Faith of the Brahmins,  
The Dharma of the land,  
With its devotion to gifts, religious study,  
                    meditation, contemplation, good conduct  
                    and truthful deeds;  
People addicted to *asuric* paths of living;  
Kings become sinful and weak;  
The people subjected to the humility of foreign  
                    education;  
Dwarfed in body, disunited in mind,  
Sorrowful in soul;  
Everything in the land has become  
But an adjunct to the Britisher.
  
9. "Oh! Thou the Merciful One!  
See this sad plight of Thine ancient land,  
The cruel ordination of inviolable destiny;  
But in the midst of this pathless maze,  
There is but one glimmering ray of hope,  
In the truthful path of Gandhian Non-cooperation.  
Look, Thou, Oh! Merciful One!  
And see thy country's sad plight,  
But for a minute".

Two or three passages in the Hymn which are of the utmost significance for a study of Gopalakrishna's character and career call for our attention.

Sree Ranganadha as the "Lord of the Tamil Race",—the "Chancellor of Tamil Nadu". This is a significant idea in the Philosophy of Gopalakrishna. The sovereignty of the land, according to him, vests not in any King or King-in-Parliament or in the Parliament or the *Vox-Populi*, which, according to the Mazzinian dictum, is *Vox-Dei*; but in God Himself, who is the creator and arbiter of all kings and Parliaments and even the peoples. And for the southern Province of Tamil-nadu, the chief Ruler, "*Tamila Jana Sambhavita Vibho*" is Sree Ranganadha, residing on the shores of the Cauvery. The great Lord sleepeth; and till He wakes nothing avail-eth. If he but wakes awhile the country will get back her *Moksham*. Therefore, it is to Him that all supplication should be made. As we have seen already, the axiom is of the utmost importance for a correct understanding of political sovereignty and the contribution is uniquely that of Gopalakrishna and is fraught with the most far-reaching consequences, when applied to the extant knowledge of political theory.

*Andhroham*:—This is a contracted form of the two words "Andhra" and "Aham". There are two ways of interpreting it. (1) "I am *an* Andhra"; and (2) "I am *the* Andhra". The former is too tame, too commonplace a proposition for the introduction of a man like Gopalakrishna, who will, in that case, be

one among two crores; and also it is too ill-suited for the grand introduction of a pure and dedicated soul before the mighty Lord of the Tamil land. Compare also the great dignity with which he addresses even the Lord in relation to his national greatness, when he speaks of Him as the Being who had trod his own country in a former age. It is, therefore, unthinkable that such a proud soul would "introduce" himself as "*an Andhra*".

The only logical and rational explanation remaining is that "he is the Andhra", or in other words, that he constitutes the Andhra Nation.

One man constituting a Nation! It may sound as ludicrous to our enlightened democratic sense. But, notwithstanding all the glories of the democratic civilization, we assert, it is the only true position; and, to this day, the dead Gopalakrishna constitutes the Andhra Nation!

A Nation lives in its great men, in its heroes, said Carlyle. "And as we measure the Himalayas by the height of Mount Everest, we must take the true measure of India from the Poets of the Veda, the sages of the Upanishads, the founders of the Vedanta and Sankhya philosophies, and the authors of the oldest law-books, and not from the millions who are born and die in their villages, and who have never for one moment been roused out of their drowsy dream of life" (Max Muller).

And Gopalakrishna was the peak of our Andhra life—to this day, one without a second—peerless



great—in thought and in action—and, without him, there is no Andhra Nation.

However much we might argue in this wise, it may sound a bit unconvincing if the dictum is not authenticated with reference to one or two concrete instances.

In the Manusmriti, which is supposed to be the Magna Charta (if we may be excused such a later terminology), as also in the Parasara Smriti, which is the Reformed Act for our middle ages, it is laid down that, in times of crises like the present one in India, where the amendment of an entire Nation's destiny becomes necessary, a *Parishat* of a hundred wise men or "Brahmins" has got to be constituted; and for its membership certain qualifications are laid down, and mere nominal Brahmins, i.e. those who merely wear that mark won't suit. And in case a hundred of such Brahmins are not available out of the entire society, at least five or four, three or even one such genuine Brahmin constitutes a *Parishat*—that is to say, the dictatorial power to alter the destinies of that entire Nation vests solely in that single soul of pure consciousness.

శ్లో॥ మునీ నామాశ్రమ విద్యానాం ద్విజానాం యజ్ఞ రూపిణామ్ ।  
 వేదప్రతేషు స్సాతానామేకోఽపిపరివద్భవేత్ ॥  
 (పరాశర ౪-౧౩)

Now, it is a matter of common knowledge that the caste 'Brahmins' of today have become both ignorant and degenerate—in the words of the

Smriti (“జరిమా త్రోవ జీవనమ్”, “ఔజానామధారకాః”) & and, as Gopalakrishna used to say, Brahmins have now become extinct in this land. “All Brahmins are now dead in India”. And it is at such a juncture that Gopalakrishna arose and became the true Brahmin, with all the necessary qualifications to constitute him not only a Parishat, but even the whole Nation.

And likewise, the case of Sgr. Mussolini, the Italian *Duce*. He is reported to have once declared: “The Italian Nation is not yet born; I myself constitute the Italian Nation”. “Sometimes I play with the idea of a laboratory for making generations; that is, of creating the class of warriors, inventors, judges, captains of industry, explorers, governors. .... To be sure, it is a lofty dream; but I see it being realised little by little”. And Mussolini is the moving world-figure today! Next to the Kaiser, the world has not yet seen an equal to him in this age, in point of diplomacy as well as of force of character. Lenin, no doubt, was a power; but he was mere thunder and lightning, without rain. He ran at a tangent with this world. But Mussolin's is the balanced Brain. And he constitutes perhaps still, the great Italian Nation! And perhaps rightly! For, was it not that single man, with but very few to follow him in the beginning, who started the Fascist movement in Italy, and in less than a decade, not only developed and organised it throughout the country, but captured the State for the Will of the Nation and made them both famous in the world? And if Italy now holds the key to the world-strategy of the future,—it is all because of Mussolini.

The comparison between Sgr. Musolini and Gopalakrishna,—one the founder of the Fascist State; the other, the author of the Brahmanical Faith—is not only interesting but irresistible. Italy is the classic land of Europe; India of the East. The former's Latin is, from a cultural stand-point, no less important than the latter's Sanskrit. Both are the central peninsulae of their respective continents, and the former's Rome is no less the "Eternal City" than the latter's Kasi (or Benares). Both Nations are great religiously and culturally—Roman Catholicism being very much akin to our *Bhaktimarga*—and even from a material stand-point, both are agricultural countries! Mussolini's attempt at a national synthesis through "functional" democracy is very much akin to the ancient Panchayat organisations of our Indian village-systems, which Gopalakrishna sought to revive through his Chirala struggle; and above all, both have claimed—and rightly—the representative and even dictatorial position for their respective nationalities. It is of course a big difference that Mussolini has succeeded, while Gopalakrishna is a failure—at least a limited achievement—But who knows what the future contains in its womb?

But the most remarkable coincidence between Gopalakrishna and Sgr. Mussolini lies in the fact that both of them have sought, each in his own way, to challenge the right of the British arms to hold the mighty sway over the world's destinies. The great pride of the Britisher is that his is the "Empire where the sun never sets", the implication being

that wherever the sun shines, there will the might of the British Arms rule! And to this assumption in all this articulate world, there are but two men who had given an effective challenge: one of them is Mussolini and the other is Gopalakrishna. For said Mussolini in his famous Phrase: “Italy also must have a place *under the sun*”, i.e., to say, “we challenge the right of the Britisher to hold an undisputed sway over the world;” or, in other and blunt words “we shall wrest a kingdom from out of the British Empire” (alluding possibly to Malta). Elsewhere in his ‘Popolo d’ Italia’ (October 1921), he put it in an even more explicit form. “We must be prepared for the possibility of putting an anti-British policy into practical operation. It is not in Italy’s interest to contribute to the maintenance of British Imperialism: rather it is in her interest to help in its destruction. The doctrine of the rise and fall of Empires has now become a current theme of speculation. The stars of Russia and Italy were rising. The sun had just set on the dreams of a Teutonic Empire. Would the British be the next to collapse?”

Mussolini talked as a great diplomat, as a politician; yet it must have been a scourge to the British pride. Likewise Gopalakrishna, down below in the fifth stanza, refers to the British claim. Though outwardly it is complimentary to the British sentiment, there is irony in his reference. In his explanatory remarks during his Madras address, he alluded to it and said: “The sun will always be eye-

ing the British Empire with his gaze''. The allusion has reference to an astrological faith, viz., that the gaze of the sun-planet on any person or institution forebodes evil!

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## CHAPTER XVI.

## The Soundarya Mahal Speech.

From Sreerangam Gopalakrishna arrived post-haste at Madras on his way home on 4—10—1922. The one cause of this hurry was that his aged grandmother was reported to be ill and about to die, and he was anxious to see her. But he was forced to stay at Madras for a day. A meeting was arranged at the Soundarya Mahal, and he was presented with welcome addresses by the Andhra and Tamil sections of the city, at the conclusion of which he delivered a stirring speech, which not only marked him as the greatest of the Andhras, but also sketched out the rationale of his new socio-religious programme in the land. The speech was delivered in Telugu, but was extensively reported in the papers and universally applauded. The following is a brief resume of the proceedings.

Addresses were presented to Gopalakrishna on behalf of both the Madras Andhra District Congress Committee and the Madras Tamil Congress Committee and he was profusely garlanded. Mr. V. Chakkrai Chettiar, in garlanding him said: "As I see Gopalakrishnayya sit before me, the impression produced on my mind is not that he has just returned from jail after undergoing the rigours of imprisonment for a year; but he appears to me like the bridegroom who had just returned from his mother-in-law's house". Mr. A. Rangaswamy Iyengar described him as "really a gem of the purest ray serene".

Gopalakrishna, on rising, was given a great ovation. He addressed the gathering for full two hours in Telugu to begin with, but in English towards the close. He commenced his speech with a Sanskrit couplet and said that Madras, which is the meeting-place for the Andhras, Tamils and Musalmans who had all met there, was a sacred place; and to every one of them who had honoured him that day, he offered his hearty thanks. And so saying, he prostrated himself before the audience, in uttermost salutation to the *Sabha*.

Now this was an event of first-rate importance in our recent public life in South India. Prostration, especially in our sacred places, is common to all religions; but in the growing age of India's irreligion, we have all but forgotten our glorious methods and forms. And in our race to imitate the superficial things of the West, our assemblies and meeting-halls have become attuned to an empty and almost ludicrous flapping of hands and cries of "Hear, Hear", "Hip! Hip! Hurrah!" and so forth; and it is all called a 'Parliamentarianism'—a new religious pretension evidently. But we in India have had our social traditions—even for the conduct of our meetings,—and according to them, great assemblages are held as holy places: "where there are thousand heads, there the God dwells"; ( సహస్రశీర్షః పురః ) and salutation to a sabha is salutation to God Himself and our classical mode of saluting is prostration—*Sashtangam*—"with all the eight limbs"—before the Idol or Ideal. This elementary position India has forgotten for centuries; and when Gopalakrishna, for the first time in recent history—



[BY COURTESY OF MISS CHRISTEL SEMISCH]





we don't think even Swami Vivekananda himself ever did it in public—prostrated himself in a great assembly in the premier city of South India, everybody was struck with wonder and felt the glory of a coming age.

The speaker began to read out—so goes the 'Swarajya' Report—"in his charming silvery tone a lengthy Sanskrit poem he composed in honour of Sree Ranganadhaswamy at Sreerangam." And the reading was followed by an interesting explanation of its meaning. Referring to himself, he said: "Half of my sin has gone by my stay in jail; the other half disappeared when I paid my *Darshan* to Sri Ranganadha. Therefore how can I be anything but a bride-groom now? Alluding to Mr. Chakkarai's hint, he said he was certainly coming out of his mother-in-law's house. He was taken to the jail to test him whether he was worthy of the hand of the Bride, who, in this case, was the *Swarajya Lakshmi*—the fair and lovely goddess of Swaraj. "The Government have tested me by all means. And I am now wearing the groom's garments," (referring to his new khaddar clothes).

He then referred to his work at Chirala and compared it with the Gurukhabag campaign and then took up the problem of our Social Inequality, "We have not developed the perfect spirit of comradeship that is essential for our future progress. The unity that is now presented in our ranks is not a genuine one; it is of the utmost superficial variety. In the Punjab, in the Akali struggle, there is the

primary incentive of Religion and that is a great unifying force. Every Akali knows that every blow that he receives takes him one step nearer Heaven. Chirala would have succeeded if there had been perfect comradeship. There were social animosities and the unity was only superficial.

“The extinction of social inequalities is the problem of all problems in our country. It is the L.C.M. of all National problems. We have not so far made any serious effort to solve it. I want to say what I have thought about this problem, while I was in jail. I am not going to say much about the Hindu-Muslim Unity. You all know the need for it! What I am more concerned with is the rotten condition of the Hindu Society. But the problem is not so easy as some think. It cannot be solved by Resolutions in the Council\*.

“To think of political freedom apart from social freedom betrays ignorance of the character of our society. There are no water-tight compartments in our life. On the other hand, they are inter-twined and inter-related. To think of the two separately is typical of the analytical mind of the West. But ours is a synthetical genius.....It is only when we can remove the social inequality that we can present a united front. That is his *Sutram*. (Gan-

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\* “In our view”, say the distinguished authors of the Simon Survey, “the most formidable of the evils which India is suffering from, have their roots in social and economic customs of long standing, which can only be removed by the action of the Indian peoples themselves.” (Vol. I. P. 409).

dhiji's). Our duty is to interpret it properly and put it into practice. And for that, let us see what we have got to do.

“First of all, there is the caste-system, with its Brahmin—Non-Brahmin and its touchability—untouchability feuds. *Everybody must become a Brahmin.* There should be no other caste, no non-Brahmin, no Chhandala or Untouchable. The present-day Brahmins are Brahmins only in name. They must first be destroyed. And with them, the Non-Brahmins also will go. Then must begin the creation of a neo-Brahminical Race, which will have no distinction of caste or creed, touchable or untouchable. Then there will be only one caste in the country, viz. of Brahmins”.

Here he traced the history of the development of the caste-system from the Vedic age downwards. “An epoch is *Smrithi-Samaya* or the time when a new Law is made. In the first epoch, highest knowledge was the only ‘reserved subject’ for the high caste: the remaining aspects of life were all open to all communities, with full and equal opportunities for all. In the second age, Sree Krishna destroyed the theory of Birth in caste, and introduced *Guna* and *Karma* as the criteria for caste. Then again, there was a change; and Sankara presented a new Smrithi by founding a new spiritual democracy and preaching the fundamental oneness of all Life. In his famous encounter with a Chhandala he made it clear that even an untouchable, if he recognises Brahman, can be initiated into the mysteries; in

other words, he too can know the Brahman—he too can receive the Brahmopadesam. That was Sankara's contribution. But Sankara could not complete his work, as he died prematurely at thirty-two.

“Now again is a *Smrithi-Samaya*—the time for a new Law. A democratic age had dawned on the world, and people could be fairly estimated in mass to be of equal capacity and understanding, provided they are given equal opportunities. The *Sutra* of Gandhiji was Love and Non-violence. Whoever carried out this principle was a Brahmin. The time is propitious, and somebody should shoulder the responsibility for the *movement of universal Brahmanisation*. Who has got the cheek and the impudence to do it nakedly and stand before the orthodox and invite their onslaughts, determined to eliminate completely the moribund orthodoxy we have got at present, and introduce in its stead, a new orthodoxy, a “dynamic orthodoxy” as Sister Nivedita called it?

“And if no one is prepared to undertake this task, I have resolved to do it myself. I am going to produce a new *Smrithi*.....I will consult whomsoever I think are worth considering. And I will at once proceed with a wholesale conversion of all into Brahmins. The work has the potentiality to enthuse even the dullest amongst us. And what is more important, no Collectors or Governors can take objection to our work of converting everybody into Brahmins. I do not want Civil Disobedience until all Hindus become Brahmins, and until Non-Brahmins disappear into Brahmins.

“A word to the Non-Brahmins. You can fight with the Brahmins. You can tear them to pieces, if you like; and I shall rejoice at it. But, why on earth should you ally yourself with the bureaucracy? But it is not your fault. I don't blame you for it. I blame my own Brahmins. They have fallen from their pristine position. And with them, who are the natural leaders, others also have fallen. And these false Brahmins have got to be destroyed; and new Brahmins should be created. I, therefore, want to create the real Brahmins. I will make all into Brahmins. I may fail. It does not matter. But I am convinced that I must at least attempt doing it. ....*Swasthi Prajabhyah etc.*”

The Chairman of the meeting, Mr. T. Prakasam, in his concluding remarks, paid an eloquent tribute to the speaker and said: “The experience of jail-life for over twelve months had spiritualized Mr. Gopalakrishnayya beyond all comprehension. He had come out of jail not with any schemes or programmes. He came out with a mission for himself—a mission which, if accomplished with the co-operation of our countrymen, would certainly mean more than Swaraj.....It was a mission which could not be attacked by Ministers or Governors, Viceroys or Secretaries of State. It was a mission in which, if they had really faith in God, they should all cooperate. The Sikhs succeeded because they had faith in God and had not lost their souls under the influence of an alien education. ....And he hoped that, just as he had done at Chirala, the Andhra Ratna would set about to produce a community which will be equal to the Sikh community, with the same faith in God, in a particular area to begin with”.

## CHAPTER XVII.

## The Masulipatam Speech.

After stirring the depths of the capital city and “sounding the gong”, viz. of Brahmanism there, Gopalakrishna entered the Andhradesa which was meant to be the arena of his spiritual battles in the first instance; and from there he carried on for months a crusade against the existing irreligion of the land and proclaimed everywhere the Gospel of his neo-Brahmanism. During this period, he delivered speeches in many important towns of Andhra on his new religious mission, and in this Chapter we shall notice the contents of one more of these speeches—viz. the one he delivered at Masulipatam.

But before going to the Masulipatam speech a word must be said of his other activities which had intervened between his Madras and Masulipatam performances. At the time of his release from jail, his grandmother was seriously ill, and Gopalakrishna felt anxious whether he would be at all able to see her before she died. So he hurried from Madras to his native village of Kuchinapudi where his wife and grandmother were. He found them both—the one well, the other ill—and God knows what joy he must have felt when he was able to see his ‘mother’ again alive. The granny lived on for a fortnight after Gopalakrishna’s return home, and about the third week of October, she died at a ripe old age.

After completing the religious obsequies of his granny which took him another fortnight, Gopalakrishna wended his way back to Chirala, where he arrived on the 6th of November. He was received at the station grandly, the elite of the town being present on the platform. In his reply, he reaffirmed his faith to settle down near Chirala and continue his Vidya Peetha Goshti work. He is reported to have sympathised with those who out of real difficulties, had gone back to the town, though he regretted that some of them should have gone back to the Municipality also. But he thought that we were in a transitional stage, and attributed the real cause of failure to the want of social and religious Unity. He was sure that they would all come back, if that Unity was established, and he hoped that the time would come when he himself would be able to achieve it.

From Chirala he seems to have proceeded to Guntur and Bezwada, whence he arrived at Masulipatam on the 11th November. Just at this time he felt that (1) the Congress Exchequer needed replenishment; and (2) secondly, he should test his own strength by putting a concrete value on his voice. Hitherto he was delivering speeches for nothing; and those who were attending his meetings were merely listening and going home, without really caring for what he had said. But now, he thought that he must make the people sacrifice a bit; and accordingly he said that, for every speech of his, there must be a Dakshina of at least Rs. 116, without which he wouldn't ordinarily deliver any speech.



From that time onwards, in every place he insisted upon this 'fee' and in every place, big or small, he got it too! And the peculiar feature of it was that, everywhere, the offering was spontaneous; and it was also a Universal gift: it contained both the rupees of the rich and the pies of the poor.

Gopalakrishna's proposition of this 'Public Bowl' has been criticised by a section of our people, as being a piece of sheer arrogance:—that he claimed himself and his speeches to be so very precious as to need a Rs. 116 "every time he ope'd his mouth"! Of course, there is no doubt that they were worth that and much more; for is not an average artist, singer, dancer, fiddler, violinist, kathaka, even a Doctor, Lawyer, Engineer, everybody almost paid a Rs. 100 or sometimes even more, for every entertainment lasting but a couple of hours? And can his critics daresay that Gopalakrishna's speeches are not worth at least that much? But even on other grounds, the criticism may be dismissed summarily. For it must be remembered that, though he got some thousands by this means, he didn't use a pie of it for himself. And, it is well-known that everywhere he gave away the proceeds to the local Congress Committee, National school, Khaddar depot or village Library; and in many places he donated it for the upliftment of the Panchamas and other depressed class people. He didn't make use of these collections even for his Ramadandu or Ramanagar or even the Ramalayam causes, which were so uniquely his own, and which, for want of nourishment had ultimately to seek the sands. Gopalakrishna's,

therefore, was an entirely selfless act, and what is more, the Congress was at that time in dire need of the 10 or 15,000 Rupees which he had raised in this unique manner at a critical period which was one of reaction rather than of mere transition. And the permanent value of a traditional revival, viz. of the 116; 1116 etc. formulae was perhaps more lasting and more important than the sums which he could actually collect and give away to this or that public cause.

Gopalakrishna arrived at Masulipatam on the 11th November 1922. As usual, a meeting was held and he delivered an important speech. At the outset he referred to the sad demise of the founder of the Andhra Jateeya Kalasala—Mr. K. Hanumantha Rao—which took place while Gopalakrishna was in jail. Notwithstanding his associations with the Kalasala, Gopalakrishna's personal regard for Mr. Hanumantha Rao never left him, and before he began his speech, he asked for his Rs. 116 to aid the Hanumantharaya Memorial Fund which had been started by his friends. Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya, it has been said, thereupon ridiculed the idea and prophesied miserable failure. But hardly had Gopalakrishna announced the proposition and sat down, when the Bowl went round and in less than ten minutes more the required sum was paid in.

In his speech, Gopalakrishna first referred to Mahatma Gandhi and his great Tapas. Gandhiji promised to get us Swaraj in one year; and the words of Mahatmas are inexorable. We should have

had Swaraj long ago; but his will-power had not yet proved adequate for the purpose. Therefore, he had gone to Yerawada jail for doing penance for a long six years; and by the time he will return from jail he will come out a *Siddha*, i.e. a perfected 'soul', whose word shall be the divine Law for mankind. And during this period, what should we do in order to prepare ourselves for his coming?

He went on: "This is not the time for any civil disobedience campaigns, because the country lacked the necessary Unity for it. Some want to enter the Councils; but that is a futile step. The real work to do is contained in Bardoli constructive programme, which is (1) Khaddar; and (2) Unity".

Khaddar, he said, means promotion of cottage industry. The modern factory industry is fraught with many evil results. Factories reduce men to slavery—into mere mill-hands. They add to the oppression of the poor at the hands of the rich. And unrest and ill-will in the society will increase. Even in the organisation of khaddar, the factory system ought not to be resorted to. Everybody should spin the yarn necessary for himself or herself.....The wage or cooly system is wrong in principle and must be discouraged.

The other thing in the Bardoli programme is the Removal of Untouchability. It is a stirring programme—in fact, a revolutionary idea. The Congress is a National institution. It does not belong to the Hindus alone. It belongs to the Hindus, Mus-

lims, Christians and all. So it preaches love towards the Chhandala in the Hindu and tolerance to the Muslim; and through Gandhiji's example of Love and Truth, it has even given the go-bye to Christian philanthropy, so that hereafter no missionary shall dare say that all heathens will go to hell. Its appeal to the Hindu is to throw away that curse of untouchability which is the root-cause of our social degeneracy. This evil exists not in touch alone. It has its roots in sound, touch, form, taste and in smell also. It is a fact that there is a lot of social inequity, ill-will and jealousy in our society. And till we remove that inequity, it is useless to pretend that we will get Swaraj.

“What do we mean by the removal of Untouchability? Is untouchability gone if we merely allow the Panchamas to sit upon our pials? Do not our house-walls still divide them from us? Is it enough if we allow them into our drawing-rooms? Between the drawing room and the dining-hall are there not still dividing walls? The curse won't go by these superficial and external reforms. We must, therefore, consider this question deeply. Mixing of castes సాంకర్ష్యము is the Law of this age. Unless we reshuffle the cards, there is no sport in the game.

“Brahmins have always been considered as the highest ideal among men in this part of the planet. Brahmins have never ruled this land. Non-Brahmins have always been our kings. But whoever was the ruler, Brahmins have always enjoyed an honour-

ed and privileged position in our society. It has been their proud privilege to keep alive the Torch of Light (Brahmopadesam) and to interpret *Dharma*. But things have become topsy-turvy now. Brahmins everywhere, in offices and in local Boards, have become 'untouchables'! They have become worse than Chhandalas. Oh! You, Brahmins what are you thinking of your present plight? Do you weep like women? Or will you seek your own salvation? Where is your race-pride now? Where is your caste-strength? Hatred of the Brahmin is growing by leaps and bounds. Kshatriyas, Vysyas, Sudras, Chhandalas, all are joining hands against the Brahmins. If there is still any light left in you, the time has come for it to shine now,—or never.

“Everyone will attempt to go up to the higher ideal and not to sink to the depths of the Chhandala level. It is Brahmanism that is the ideal of all. The Vysyas are aspiring after it. Some of the Sudras of late have begun to wear the sacred thread. The goldsmiths have dubbed themselves as ‘Viswa Brahmanas’. It is, therefore, but legitimate that everybody should aspire to reach the high-caste level. And if we are to apply the Law of Equality among all, we shall make them all into Brahmins. We must convert the new Non-Brahmana movement into a Brahmin movement.

“*He who shall grasp the secret of Gayatri shall be a Brahmin.* Everybody, whether he is a Kshatriya or Vysya, Sudra or Chhandala, can become a pure soul by the initiation of Gayatri. The great

Non-Brahmin sage, Viswamitra of old did sacrifices and became a Brahmin. Sree Krishna, likewise, set aside the standard of birth for determining one's caste. Buddha showed the path of Nirvana to all, irrespective of caste. But all these efforts could not avail for the laying of a solid foundation to Hindu society. It was left to Sree Sankaracharya to supply this solid basis in his Adwaita philosophy. But Sankara had hardly the time to begin his work. He could barely finish his preachings when he died. His interview with the Chhandala shows that he approved the idea of applying Adwaita even to our everyday practical life. After Sankara, Ramanuja gave the *Tir-Mantra* to all castes, including the untouchables. But even his work was still incomplete.

“Gandhiji is now the man to fulfil this great ideal of our social unification. This removal of untouchability should not be interpreted in any narrow sense. Truth and non-violence are his cardinal principles. They are the pivot of Brahmanism in India. .... Classification of society into castes is possible only when their minds and functions agree. But when professions are practised irrespective of caste, mixing up—*Sankaryam*—is inevitable. I am a Brahmin. I have received the Brahmapadesam. I have the authority to convert others to Brahmanism. I challenge those of them who deny my authority to prove their case. I am prepared to lay down my own before you. But I shall not hearken to the bigoted.

“Even the orthodoxy must bear one thing in mind. At present, our Hindu society is in a critical

condition. There is deep discontent all-round; and the whole country is in slavery. Pray, will you find out a remedy? Who of you will dare deny that untouchability is *not* a bar to the consolidation of our society? Let alone your shastras. Can't you bind all society with one bond of love, at least as a war-measure—as an *Apat-Dharma*? If you want to preserve the Brahmana tradition, is it good that disaffection against it grows? Or will you show the path of redemption to all?

“I have decided to give the Gayatri to all people and to purify everybody thereby. I am not concerned with the conventions and local practices of sects and sub-sects. They may do as they please. Even among Brahmins, the same customs do not obtain. In food and raiment, in marriage, caste-mark and conduct, they may do according to their caste. But everybody should learn the Gayatri; practise non-violence; and wear Khaddar. These are the three tests of Brahmanism. *In every village, I shall found Brahmin Goshtis consisting of such Brahmins. All those that join such Goshtis shall be deemed as Brahmins. Every Goshti shall conduct a school and a dispensary. They might also have a Library, co-operative society and Panchayat court. Through these, the Goshti shall acquire the powers of village-government. If every village is strengthened in this manner, unity is easily attained and Swaraj is then in sight*”.

This was in November 1922; and the reader may remember his latter-day formula of May 1927, where-

by he desired to form a private Goshti “to help each other and develop a certain relationship which rises above caste and above everything else, in pursuit of Reality—” “To try to evolve, on the whole, a new order of Life or Religion, absolutely unostentatiously and to immediately practise living up to it.” We shall close this interesting section with two extracts from two such widely differing thinkers of recent India, like Swami Vivekananda and Mr. M. R. Jayakar, which throw a flood of light on the problems we have been discussing in this and the preceding chapters.

The following is from the ‘Life of Vivekananda’ by his Eastern and Western disciples. “Most of all, the leader (Vivekananda) initiated his fellow-monks into the living realities of Hinduism, making them conscious of the values of its thought and spirit..... He made them master the Upanishads, the Yoga-Vasishta, the Puranas and other shastras, until they knew why the Rishis were so exclusive to those who were outside the pale of Hinduism; but their Mission (i.e. of the Ramakrishna Order) was to *Brahmanise* them (non-Hindus) and *Brahmanise* the Sudras. Even in these early days, one witnesses herein the two-fold gospel of Vivekananda, that of giving the learning and spirit of the Brahmans to those outside the fold of Hinduism, thus propagating it as a World-Religion, and that of conveying the Brahmanical culture to the Indian millions themselves thus reshaping and solidifying and strengthening the diverse races of Hindusthan into a Nation”. (Vol. II. p. 31).



“In modern India”, said Vivekananda at Khetri, “the people are neither Hindus nor Vedantins—they are merely don’t-touchists; the kitchen is their temple; and cooking-pots their objects of worship. This state of things must go. The sooner it is given up, the better for our Religion. Let the Upanishads shine in their glory, and at the same time, let not quarrels exist among the different sects”.

On the birth-day of Sri Ramakrishna; “As one after another of the lay disciples of Sri Ramakrishna or of himself came, he let it be known that those of them who were not Brahmins but who really belonged to the other two twice-born castes, were on that day to be invested with the sacred thread. Speaking to his Brahmana disciple Saratchandra, whom he commissioned to perform the ceremony, he said: ‘The children of our Lord are, indeed, Brahmanas. Besides, the Vedas themselves say that every one of the twice-born castes has the right of having *Upanayanam*, or investiture with the sacred thread. They have no doubt become *Vratyas*, i.e. fallen from their own ritualistic rights, but by performing the ceremony of expiation, they are reentitled to their original caste rights. This is the birth-day of Sri Ramakrishna. Everyone will be purified by taking his Name. Therefore, this is the best occasion for giving the *Bhakthas* the sacred thread. Give all those who come the appropriate *Gayatri Mantram*, according as they are Kshatriyas or Vysyas. All these must be gradually raised to the status of the Brahmana. All Hindus are brothers. It is we Hindus who have degraded them by repeatedly say-

ing for centuries, 'we won't touch you! we won't touch you!' No wonder that the whole country is brought down to the verge of humiliation, cowardice and stupidity. Now they have to be raised by preaching to them the gospel of Hope and Cheer. Preach to them: "you too are men like ourselves; you too have the same rights as we have". As a result of the Swamiji's decision more than fifty *Bhakthas* on that day received the Gayatri Mantram and the sacred thread having first bathed themselves in the Ganges and then bowed before the Image of Sri Ramakrishna".

How like Gopalakrishna, and yet how different! The ideal was just the same: it was to Brahmanise the East and West. But Gopalakrishna addressed himself first to the East, and preached the gospel of Brahmanising even the Sudra; he didn't take shelter under any special holiness of his Guru's Birthday; while Vivekananda addressed himself more to the Brahmanisation of the West and he also claimed the privilege of his *Sanyasa* for his actions, while Gopalakrishna braved it through-out as a *Grihastha*. Gopalakrishna, no doubt, was not spared to witness the practice of his preaching, but of Vivekananda's achievement we read: "The initiates were naturally much ridiculed by their neighbours for having raised themselves to the status of Brahmins. Be that as it may though the Swami did not preach in public in favour of giving the sacred thread to the so-called Sudra, he was glad to watch the movement to Brahmanize all the castes who claimed to be twice-born, which had been in existence for sometime ago,

spread rapidly in Bengal in recent years. And now-a-days, a large demand is made for the Brahminical thread by those who have so long been regarded as Sudras" (p. 215).

Mr. M. R. Jayakar, in his Presidential Address at the Sindh Provincial Hindu Conference held in October 1925, declared: "In Maharashtra,.....the Non-Brahmin wanted to wear the sacred thread, to learn Gayatri, in short, to enter the cultural fold of Brahmins. Hinduism will have to satisfy this craving, wherever it is genuine and deeply felt. The time has, therefore, come for making this (Hindu organization) a broad-based movement and, if this is done, the men at present despised of by Hinduism can enter the fold of Hinduism provided they are willing to meet the cultural tests and requirements and it would take away all antagonism (in our present-day society)".

It may be added, in passing, that the Tandya or Praudha Brahmana attached to the Sama Veda contains certain *Vratya-Stomas*, which are sacrifices meant to enable non-Brahmanical Indians to enter the Brahmanical order. The Maha-Bharatam gives us a number of clues in the direction; and other shastras, we believe, also contain similar provisions, but we regret we are to part company with this most profoundly interesting subject, with which the entire future of our social destiny is intimately linked.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

Some "Tests of Brahmanism".

In the last chapter we have read the outline "tests of a Brahmin", as given out by Gopalakrishna in the course of his Masulipatam speech; and, in the absence of a definite code of a new Religion—a new *Brahmana Smriti*—formulated by himself, it behoves us to examine if and to what extent he meant these tests to be sacred and inviolable. And in order to do so, it is also necessary to recapitulate here the other or similar "tests" which he formulated from time to time in the course of his other speeches, conversations, writings or actions.

The tests of Brahminism as given in his Masulipatam speech are three, viz. (1) the wearing of Khaddar; (2) practising Ahimsa or Non-violence; (3) and the recital of Gayatri.

In his Ramnagar village-scheme, he prescribed (1) Khadi-wearing; (2) Non-violence; (3) Removal of Untouchability; and (4) Non-drinking or Temperance as the four-fold rules of citizenship.

In the Telugu statement of objects and aims of the Brahmana Goshti, which gives us a glimpse into his maturer mind, he postulates a faith in and practice of Adwaitam (Oneness) as the only test of Brahminism. In the faith that all is Brahman, one should accept the brand of a Brahmin and lead his life. And he is a Brahmin!

In his letter dated 25—1—1927, he wrote: "If at all I live, I just wish to have a clean slate before me to start with. I of today want to die; and I of tomorrow want to be a fresher on this planet, if that is to be"; and a little later, he discussed in the same strain, some aspects of life, which he held as very dear, and which he had "made up his mind" to adopt if he should live. (1) One should have a house of his own to live in—a *Griham* for a *Grihastha*—a cottage and a cow evidently for every Brahmin! (2) One should use only hand-pounded rice or flour and not the factory product. (3) We must revert to the use of mud-pots for our utensils, instead of the brass or alluminium tinsel which is flooding our homes, with its long trail of disease and worse. (4) And khaddar, hand-made paper (vide his article on 'Triveni') and indigenous medicines etc.

These then were his *commendments*—not *commandments*—relating mostly to food, drink, clothing, housing etc.,—very important in themselves, from the stand-point of the adage "Gain home, gain everything".

But his real position seems to be much deeper than the home: and, we have already seen his message was "Gain self; gain all". And a faith in the Self or Brahman and a constant worship and meditation on the Self is the bed-rock of his creed.

"Ours is not an institution", he wrote, "which is to save or Swarajise a Nation.....Ramanagar is too small a thing for such grand achievements as 'serving the country'. It is just a place to live".

“The Goshti was never intended to ‘serve a public purpose’ in the current common democratic sense of it.....I will be happy if.....some religiously-minded, humbler person take up its work. Doers of public good, as such, are not of much consequence for it, or for any abiding cultural Goshti”.

“If I depended on God for food, they are perhaps more wise and depended upon ‘themselves’. And what is this ‘selves’, pray, if not God?” (Letter dated 7—7—27).

In trying to go through these things at this distance of time, and endeavouring to picture to one’s mind the *ideal* conditions of a truly Brahminical life one would be struck by a few general characteristics.

One thing is that, at the time of which we are speaking, Gopalakrishna had to pitch his new Brahminism still to the Congress tune, trying to keep up his loyalty to Gandhiji and his Bardoli Constructive Programme of Khaddar, Untouchability, Temperance and Unity; while the fact of it was that he did everything to explode that bubble, which he later on described as a “ritual without Religion”.

For instance, regarding the charka, which was the pivot of Gandhism, he wrote in his *Sadhana* (Vol. 3. p. 11): “These are the days of spinning; perhaps the age of spinning has burst upon us; and this is the yarn I spin,—at the point, however, of my pen, my literary charka. Its weight, durability, utility, finesse and finish I leave to your wits to determine. But cannot you concede this much that the point of the pen is at least as good and efficacious an instru-

ment as its industrial prototype in starving the bureaucratic smile off its intestinal venom, restoring to it its original human compassion and purity? The pen is at least as good an antidote as the charka for the agony of the soul and is the most ancient *Japa-mala* of the heart to paragraph out all its hopes and fears, its woes and outpourings to God in its countless knots. If the music of the spinning wheel pours out the radiant melodies of a contented stomach and sobered appetite, that of the pen-point yields the intoxicated hurrah of a liberated soul. Both are good and both are included in the Congress Programme, the one by statement and the other by implication. The one is taken up when the stomach hungers, the other when the heart aches; the one is a sacrament for the *Grihastha*, the other the solace of a Sannyasi; the one gives bread and the other wine; and let me sing with the poet:

Here, with a loaf of bread beneath the bough,  
A flask of wine, a Book of verse,—and Thou  
Beside me singing in the wilderness,  
Oh, wilderness were Paradise enow!"

Secondly, however much he liked this or that particular item of a programme or desired to cater to this or that aspect of our life—real or ideal—he was, to quote his own words; “not wedded to any dogma, not sold to any doctrine, ever open, provocatively open”, though he would “insist on something tangible being done at least in our lives by way of social rectitude” (Letter dated 13—4—1925). The fact is, he wanted that the members of the Goshti should discuss among themselves the various rules of conduct and live up to those rules and principles

arrived at by such comradeship. Thus every meeting must account for realities; every member should immediately undertake living up to the Goshti conclusions. These principles themselves may be very simple, relating mostly as we have seen, to our domestic economy; but they are very necessary, because Nations by themselves are not made: They are born in our hempen cots, and they grow in the laps of our good Yasodas or in the happy cradles of our homes.

However, there seems to be no doubt that in his neo-Brahminical programme, he wished ultimately to rely on the sacred *Gayatri*, the great spiritual and spiritualising *Mantra*, which begins with the one syllable “Aum”, which is the gate-way to the three Vedas, and which, the Shastras say, is ‘Brahman’; and that *Mantra* is said not only to illumine a man’s mind, but to make men reborn, that is to say, what are merely material minds will be uplifted to a higher and more glorious *Brahma-marga*, and the boy that was but a Sudra by birth is made by virtue of the *Gayatri-Uccharana* (muttering) a *Dwija* (born a second time, i.e. spiritually)—just like the turning of an electric switch makes a dark room lighted. And in this very same Masulipatam speech, he referred to the *Gayatri Mantram* and declared that, whoever learns the *Gayatri*, he shall be a Brahmin; and the sacred fire of Savitri shall burn away all the dross even of birth—nothing, in fact, shall stand its mighty march! That is, perhaps, as it ought to be, because, as we have seen, our Shastras themselves prescribe that for all the Sadhakas, the Guru is the spiritual Father and *Gayatri* the Mother.



In this age of irreligion, one might be wondering what this all means—what this “giving of *Gayatri*” is! Is it riches? Is it wealth? To be “given” from hand to hand?—just as father bequeaths property to a child? Or at least is it like a Bank account to be “transferred”?

We say, it is all. It is riches; it is wealth. It is property; it is capital. The Guru “gives the *Gayatri*” to the pupil, just as fathers hand over estates to their sons. And the *Gayatri* is given through the mouth—actually it is muttered silently into the ear—for the pupil to learn with devotion; improve it with practice; put it to use; himself take his “interest”; and pass on the original Capital, together with the added “interest” to the next heirs, i.e. to his own disciples. And they say, it all grows with the giving! Material wealth diminishes with our gifts; but, in case of this “spiritual Estate”, if we represent one’s wealth as 100 units and one gives 5 out of it to 5 others, then one’s riches are increased to 105! A new arithmetic, evidently!

After his Masulipatam speech, Gopalakrishna pursued his Brahmanical mission for two months more, November and December 1922; made many more speeches in many more places; carried on the Torch of Brahmanism far and wide in the country; and towards the end of December he went on a pilgrimage to Gaya and Kasi, coupling it with a little of Congress business, which pursued him still and eventually bled him white. We shall read about his pilgrimage to the North in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER XIX.

## Pilgrimage to Gaya and Kasi.

Gopalakrishna took round his Brahmanical Torch across the length and breadth of Andhra during November and December 1922; and at the end of December, he proceeded along with his wife, to Gaya to attend the National Congress which was holding its sessions there that year. After staying at Gaya during the Congress week and after a bath in the river Phalguni, they both proceeded to Kasi, the 'Eternal City' of India, nay, of the world, where the Lord of the Universe—*Visva-nadha*—dwells, on the banks of the river Ganga, alongside his Spouse, Sree *Annapurna*, the great 'Giver of Food' and his ever-vigilant *Kala-Bhairava* or the Watch Dog of fleeting Time; and the whole place is a *Kshetram*, i.e. holy spot, because it is the perpetual burning ghat—the cremation-ground of all human egotism; and to this day, every Hindu aspires to go to Kasi at least once in his or her life-time; to die in that city is considered a veritable pass-port to heaven; and after people die, the only Will which they leave behind is that their ashes might be dissolved in its holy waters! And a drop of the Ganga, preserved and worshipped daily in every Hindu home, is likewise considered as the *aqua divina*—capable of washing off all human sins and ensure Moksham for the soul!

Superstitions some of these, doubtless, are! But they are no less senseful than similar things of the West for instance, their "See Naples and die". And

it is not the merely physical and geographical grandeur that Kasi (Benares) can boast of, though, in its prime of youth, it must have been a most lovely city. It is not even the presence of the holy waters that command universal homage at Kasi, though, indeed, their atmosphere of peace and plenty must have had its own effect. Nor is it even the lustre of Letters that throws a spell on *Varanasi*, though the most illustrious Pundits that ever trod on earth lived there and preached. Yet the glories of Kasi are none of these. It is the presence of the silent God—Siva—as Visweswara or Viswanadha—the Lord of the Universe—who commands and rules the worlds; who destroys and takes everyone unto Himself;—which inspires Kasi. And surrounding Him, there are the other Gods and Goddesses—Kasi, in fact, is the city of Temples—legions of Yogees or God-men; Sannyasis or ascetics; pundits and scholars who shed lustre over the entire world. There is no cinema pose about it: it is all a grim reality about Kasi—the city of burning ghats! And here it was that that great Apostle of Truth, whose name has lived through ages, Harischandra, was made the *Kati kapari* (or Funeral-supervisor),—for such is the work of the Zeit-Geist—it humbles down the royal monarchs and elevates the fallen, if they seek! And Kasi is sacred, because it is symbolic of Death—the consummation of Life, which none—not even the highest amongst us—can escape.

Gopalakrishna was at Kasi for a few days and had just finished a few *Darshans* or visits to the sacred shrines, when his wife was suddenly taken ill

and their stay was unexpectedly prolonged. When she developed serious symptoms, she was removed to the care of the good Khilladar of the Vizayanagar Fort—who was a tower of strength in those days to all Andhra visitors to the North—and placed under expert medical treatment. But she became worse and at last medical help was declared unavailing. The best of the allopaths and the highest of the Ayurvaidyas declared her as lost; the patient was gasping for her last breath; and the husband was silently watching, in subdued grief, the passive frame by the lamp-light; when there came an ascetic from somewhere;—none knew him before; nobody sent for him; and none even knew whither he went subsequently.—looked at the dying invalid; gave three powders for forced thrusting into the mouth; and, on revival of breath, he advised pomegranate juice and went his way!

It was a miracle. For no sooner was the first powder administered, than the woman showed returning signs of life; the pulse began to beat; the body steadily warmed up; the heart began to heave; and there was even a sigh of relief! After a while, the eye-lids opened, and slowly the consciousness came back. It was really a God-send to Gopalakrishna—the woman that had almost died, was now really restored! And what is more, her previous ailments were all gone, and she now built up an ‘iron’ constitution, and there after she not only never suffered from any severe illness, but very soon was conceived again and in less than a year she gave birth to their only surviving son in December 1923, who was really a gift of Viswanadha to Gopalakrishna.

But Gopalakrishna's visit to North India was not a purely religious affair; as a matter of fact, he went to Gaya to attend the Congress sessions. By the time he came out of jail, the political situation in India was briefly thus:

The country which, throughout the year 1921, was at the white-heat of a non-violent war with the bureaucracy had been felled down to the bottom-most depths by the so-called Bardoli Resolutions of the Congress Working Committee—and what is more to the purpose, those Resolutions formed the basis of rival schools of political thought in the country, one of which swore by the letter of the Resolutions and their Mantra of “Khaddar, khaddar and nothing else but khaddar”; and the other aiming to reinforce it with a political programme of some colour, substance and stamina. The former, led by Messrs. C. Rajagopalachary and Vallabhai Patel came to be known as the No-changers, i.e. people who did not desire to have any change in the orthodox ritual of the Bardoli constructive programme; and the latter, headed by the late Mr. C. R. Das, Mr. Vittalbhai Patel, and the late Hakim Ajmal Khan and Pundit Motilal Nehru banded themselves into a new Swarajya Party, and Gopalakrishna's coming out of jail synchronised with the birth of a new Swarajism, of the Dasite stamp, in which the Gandhian charkha was not dismissed, of course, but certainly relegated to a back position; and emphasis was laid on the capture of legislative Councils and local bodies, which according to Mr. Das, had become the ramparts of British Rule in India, and which for that very rea-

son, had to be effectively captured by the forces of Indian Nationalism, and not merely "boycotted" and left under charge of sycophants and worse men, as it had happened under the Gandhian scheme of Non-cooperation. And Mr. Das was actually asking: "For God's sake, why do you send wretched men to the Councils?" and he wanted that the Congressmen should capture these legislatures in India.

This is not the place to discuss at any length about the relative merits and demerits of either school of thought; but owing to its relation to the subsequent work of Gopalakrishna, a reference to the main point at issue cannot be altogether avoided.

As Lytton says in his book on Rienzi the great Italian revolutionary of the fourteenth century A.D., there is nothing more glorious than a successful revolution in a country which, through centuries, has been reduced to slavery; but, at the same time, there is nothing more tragic than an attempt at insurrection ending in a humiliating failure, for it will even deprive the oppressor of a moral fear of a possible rebellion, sometime, somewhere, by somebody and will free his hand to an unbridled rule of fire and sword.

And the case of 1922 India was, more or less similar to the one above described. The campaign of Non-cooperation had, from the admissions even of our British Governors, completely shaken the foundations of British Raj in the East; but the precipitate withdrawal from the field of action—let alone

the merits of individual items of the new “programme”—on the part of the nationalistic forces at a time when they were in the white heat of a ‘non-violent war’, had not only spelled ruin to the ranks, but it actually tightened the grip of the foreigner, and as a matter of fact, while Lord Reading was “on his knees” for a Round Table Conference in December 1921, he was still unbending in his opposition even for an announcement of the Conference method at the end of 1929!

The late Mr. Das—all honour for his vision and glory for his sacrifices—perceived the inwardness of this situation as none other had; and with a view to extricate a “defeated Nation” from being crushed, he laid down his life, as it were, in the path of the opponent, and by capturing the very citadels of British power in India, he not only kept up the prestige of the Nation, but he saved the country from a veritable destruction; and, if every Non-cooperator had not been weeded out of India in 1922-23,—as the “Extremists” of the Vandemataram days had been done earlier, and as the Bolsheviks had done with regard to their Czarist and other opponents in Russia—in fact the complete extermination of all opponents is a hallowed political principle మూలకేవల శత్రుకేవలము అంచరాదు it was solely due to the self-effacing efforts of the late Mr. Das and his devoted band of lieutenants in the Swarajya Party. But these efforts of Mr. Das and his colleagues were strenuously opposed by the orthodox No-changers, who constituted the majority in the Congress, and

they took up the mantle of the Mahatma on themselves and did everything in their power to frustrate their aims.

In this internecine warfare between the No-changers and the Swarajists, Gopalakrishna, we will find, took no mean part.

Immediately after his release from jail, he was faced with the problem: "To enter the Councils or not to enter" which, in fact, was the burning question of the day. And for answering it, apart from his loyalty to his chief, he relied upon the reports of his Congress friends who depicted Mr. Das and others as horrible self-seekers and in his earlier speeches he began to condemn, nay revile and ridicule the Pro-Council wallahs. Thus a strong No-change mentality colours his first speeches after freedom.

At the Gaya Congress where Mr. Das presided, he ranged himself actively on the side of the No-changers; and the picture of the bearded Gopalakrishna announcing to an eager audience that, in the polling division which followed the Council-entry debate, the white card—a vote for Gandhiji—would take them to Heaven; and the blue (or red?) one favouring the Swarajya Party, points the way to Hell—must be still in the remembrance of those who attended that Congress from Andhradesa. And mainly owing to his work, excepting a few dissentients, the Andhra block voted solidly for 'No-change'.



At the same time, in the course of the Congress sessions and after, Gopalakrishna must have witnessed an under-current of incapacity or insincerity in the No-change ranks; and a suspicion gradually began to creep into his mind as to why the Gandhian leaders, instead of applying themselves to a task of social and religious unification—which, to him, mattered most—they were ever holding the dagger of civil disobedience before the public gaze, just to win a cheap vote for themselves. He himself led a great campaign of civil disobedience and, therefore, he knew the various ins and outs of it: while the rest of them really had no experience of it, and, with a “lip-deep Japam” of the Constructive programme, merely began talking of “preparations” for civil disobedience!

Gopalakrishna left the Gaya Congress with such doubts in his mind; and though his vote was with the No-changers at that time, a careful reader of his speeches and utterances since his return from jail cannot help noticing that he was rather in uncomfortable company in the Congress fold. This divergence later on intensified and gradually widened till at last he declared that he would be “with sinners rather than with spinners,” meaning thereby the Swarajists who were supposed to be ‘sinning’ in respect of the Congress orthodoxy, and the No-changers respectively.

The resolution No. VIII of the Gaya Congress on Civil Disobedience ran as follows: “This Congress reaffirms its opinion that civil disobedience is the only civilised and effective substitute for an

armed rebellion when every other remedy for preventing the arbitrary, tyrannical and emasculating use of authority has been tried.

“And in view of the wide-spread awakening of the people to a sense of the urgent need for Swarajya and the general demand and necessity for civil disobedience in order that the national goal may be speedily attained, and in view of the fact that the necessary atmosphere of non-violence has been preserved inspite of all provocation.

“This Congress calls upon all Congress workers to complete the preparations for offering Civil Disobedience by strengthening and expanding the National organisation and to take immediate steps for the collection of at least Rs. 25 lakhs for the Tilak Swarajya Fund and the enrolment of at least 50,000 volunteers.....by a date to be fixed by the All India Congress Committee.....and empowers the Committee to issue necessary instructions for carrying this resolution into practical effect.”

The A.I.C.C. which met at Gaya on 1—1—1923 fixed 30th April 1923 as the date for “completing these preparations” for Civil Disobedience; but as they were left unfinished at the end of the period, the A.I.C.C. which met on 25—5—23, “regretted that the period fixed at Gaya for the collection of money for the Tilak Swarajya Fund and the enrolment of volunteers has expired without the quota for men and money being completed.”

But we are anticipating events too much; and so far as Gopalakrishna was concerned, the first sign of his political conversion was in the obituary which he announced over the Gaya Congress in an interview dated 15—2—1923 which *interalia* reads thus:

“The quintessence of the deliberations of the Gaya Congress was an unalloyed reaffirmation of Mahatmaji’s position.....The Civil Disobedience clause in the Resolution is as bad as the Compromise alternative in the matter of its ineffectuality and inexpediency, and it was tolerated purely on the ground of its harmlessness. It lacks exactness.....Sjt. Rajagopalachariar was either doubtful or reluctant or diplomatic to disclose the purpose and programme for which the men and money were intended. He, however, consoled himself that there was sufficient time to think over the specific form and occasion of the projected Civil Disobedience and shaped every one of his arguments, nay, every word of his, with the solemn prefix: “Thus spake Mahatma Gandhi,” and this satisfied us all, though, those of us who are to be in the actual mire, are still pretty sceptical as to the achievement of this feat of collecting men and money. ‘Thus wants Mahatmaji, and we shall proceed on!.....’.

“The acceptance and undertaking of Civil Disobedience must not trouble us very much and in fact, ought not to enter into our consideration in the matter of collection of men and money. If at the end of April, Civil Disobedience is ordered by the

All India Congress Committee or Working Committee, I think we must hold a Special Provincial Conference (in Andhra) to accept or reject it, as, I feel, we shall not be ready for Civil Disobedience even after this collection, the constructive programme remaining unfulfilled till then. I cannot accept the dictum that Civil Disobedience trains to Civil Disobedience.....

“Q:—Now that you have returned home, what is your programme of work?

“A:—As I have already stated, I wish to concentrate my attention upon this removal of untouchability and upon social reconstruction which is another name for the Unity enjoined by Mahathmaji..... That is the chief problem..... And, in Andhra, I, in my own humble way, want to devote my undivided attention to it hence-forward..... I have now more than ever come to the belief that there is absolutely no use of doing anything else until we achieve this Unity, which alone can yield us the necessary spirit, both of brotherliness and nonviolence.”

The next we hear of him is from Guntur, where we are told in a cryptic Press Telegram, “Andhra-ratna Duggirala Gopalakrishnayya arrived here yesterday (20—2—23). It is rumoured that he is going to start an Anglo-Telugu Daily paper shortly at Bezwada.” And the story of that new adventure is briefly told.

The "Sodarasamiti" or, as its full name goes, "Sreemad Andhra Sodara Samiti, Limited", was a Joint Stock Company, founded by Gopalakrishna and registered in May 1923, under the Indian Companies Act 1913, with an authorised capital of Rs. 2,50,000, with the object of publishing "books, magazines, journals, news-papers etc." "Under the auspices of the Goshti, it is.....proposed to start immediately, as an initial step, the publication of two daily papers, one in English and one in Telugu, which shall deal in a perfectly dispassionate and tolerant spirit with all the problems of life from the stand-point of national idealism." Gopalakrishna himself was to be the Managing Director of the Company for twelve years (but Mr. I. Venkataramanayya of Bezwada also joined as a Co-sharer very soon); and six per cent. of the net profits of the Company shall be donated to Sreemat Andhra Vidya Pitha Goshti, Ramnagar, Chirala".

It had a good start in the beginning; and about a dozen leading men of Madras and Andhra readily agreed to "take due share in its establishment and achievement." Gopalakrishna himself went from place to place, enlisting Members and Directors; he took his residence in Bezwada for the purpose; and paid flying visits to Guntur, Nellore, Kurnool, Nandyal and Madras; and in July 1923, he went to Nagpur, where there was a meeting of the All India Congress Committee for canvassing greater support for his enterprise. Everything was thus ready for the actual 'commencement of business' when, at the Nagpur meeting of the A.I.C.C., he was elected as

the General Secretary of the Congress, and he practically gave up the Samithi for the nonce. After his release from the All India Congress affairs, a few more attempts were made to start the machine, but experience showed that it had long ago come to a dead--still; and the Samithi was eventually wound up in 1927.



## CHAPTER XX.

## Congressional Fire-works.

In the last chapter, we traced the story of the Sodara Samithi and saw how, just at the time when he floated that company for purpose of starting a Press and some papers, which could have served both his mission and his means, he was elected to the General Secretaryship of the All-India Congress Committee; and in this chapter we shall read of his Congressional career, which, in view of its brilliance and futility, we have called for want of a better term his "political fire-works".

The election itself was an accident; and there was no idea of it at the time he went to Nagpur. He went to Nagpur on the Company's business: and he returned as the A.I.C.C. Secretary, bringing with him the A.I.C.C. office, which, however, had devoured the Company's career.

As Congress Secretary, he showed a brilliant performance; and, in order to understand the main contribution of his work, it is necessary to remember the exact situation within the Congress at this time. As already stated, there was an open split between the Swarajists and the No-changers, which was tearing the Congress into two. The Gaya Congress of December 1922 threw out by a two-thirds majority, the proposals of Mr. Das and his friends for giving a new and effectively political orientation to the Congress activities; but,

instead, resolved upon "completing the preparations for offering civil disobedience" by the end of April 1923. Mr. Das resigned his Presidentship on 1—1—1923; but his resignation was "referred to the next meeting of the A.I.C.C.". Mr. Rajagopalachary who had carried the day at Gaya hoped that, by April-end, he would be able to bury Mr. Das's Council programme; but soon after the Congress, there was such a commotion raised in the Congress circles that the A.I.C.C. which met at Ahmedabad on 27—2—23 had to effect a temporary truce, calling upon both sides to "suspend Council propaganda till the 30th April", it being laid down that "each party to adopt such course after the 30th April as it may be advised."

By the end of April, the required "preparations" for civil disobedience were found incomplete; the men and money asked for by Mr. Rajagopalachary were not forth-coming; and in the A.I.C.C. meeting held at Bombay in May, the No-change leaders refused to be a party to "close up their ranks" with the Swarajists and "present a united front for Swaraj by not carrying on any propaganda amongst the voters and six of them resigned from the Congress executive accordingly. Mr. Das was not in a majority yet in the Congress, though his position was being better understood now; nevertheless, he persisted in his resignation, out of a sense of fair-play to the Congress; and all the resignations were, therefore, accepted and a neutral executive was set up. But barely a month passed and the political situation again changed so quickly that the



A.I.C.C. met again at Nagpur in the second week of July and resolved upon a special sessions of the Congress, and with that Resolution, the newly set-up Executive also succumbed and a fresh Working Committee was elected in its stead, this time composed still of the No-changers, but with a shade more of the Swarajist colouring, if not of persuasion. As a result of this reshuffling, Gopalakrishna emerged as the General Secretary of the A.I.C.C.

The real inwardness of the No-change programme will be evident, if further proof were necessary, by the following extracts from the official records of the Congress. Says a report of the proceedings of the Working Committee which met at Poona on 17—4—1923 (composed at that time mostly of No-changers):

“Sjt. C. Rajagopalachariar and Sjt. Rajendra Prasad explained the proposals made by Desabandhu Das in the conversations held at Lahore namely that

- (i) The work of the Congress should be divided into separate departments, each being placed in charge of a particular class of workers; e.g., National Education, Capture of Local Bodies and Councils, Khaddar, Foreign Propaganda, Civil Disobedience, Labour, Untouchability and the like. Persons interested in particular departments should be entrusted with work in those departments.

- (ii) That a sum of Rs. 5 to 6 crores be collected to finance the various departments so created and thus,
- (iii) A common platform should be provided for all”.

After the exhibition of all the woeful inaneness of the No-change programme one would expect their leaders to accept the above comprehensive scheme of Nation-building; but the Resolution No. I of the Committee non-chalantly proceeded:

“The Committee having considered this proposal is unanimously of opinion that it cannot recommend this proposal to the All India Congress Committee, as it is impracticable, and in regard to the abandonment of the boycott of the Councils, contrary to the decisions of the Congress.”

And even in July, the No-change leaders were still unbending in their opposition to Mr. Das and therefore, in response to “a strong desire in some provinces”, the A.I.C.C. that met at Nagpur resolved “that a special session of the Congress be convened at Bombay about the middle of August next”.

The choice of Bombay as the venue of the Congress was another move of No-change diplomacy; for Bombay, it is well-known, was a position of vantage to them being near to Gujarat, Karnataka, Madras and Andhra, which were all ‘strong-holds’ for Gan-

dhism. Mr. Das realised this handicap, but for the moment, being in a minority, he was helpless; and, therefore, he allowed Mr. Rajagopalachary to depart in great glee for his victory, which, however, was short-lived.

The election of Gopalakrishna to the Congress Executive came in just at this time; and, examining all things, he quickly decided to rescue the Congress from this suicidal party squabble. Till now, he had been a consistent No-changer;—in May 1923 he challenged Mr. Das in an open meeting at Guntur; but though he was told that Mr. Das was a modern Vi-bheeshana, i. e. the great betrayer of Gandhism, he found him as much a 'Man of the Moment' as Gandhiji himself (Vide his 'Sadhana' 1); and as he realised inwardly the great "fire of Das", possibly he even thought that he might do a good turn for his movement, if an opportunity occurred.

There were three outstanding matters which Gopalakrishna had to face on his assumption of Congress office. One was the Akali (Sikh) Gurdwara movement in the Punjab; secondly, the Nagpur Flag Satyagraha; and, lastly, the Congress schism. It will be interesting to examine how Gopalakrishna acquitted himself in respect of each of these.

The Akali struggle was only a side-issue for the Congress objective, which was Swaraj. The Gurdwara campaign was a local and quasi-religious struggle, which had already ended practically by the

time he assumed the reins of Congress office; and he had merely to keep watch over the developments from day to day, and help them, wherever possible with a little of Congress sympathy and support, which he gladly gave. But the main part of his work in this behalf was to witness those glorious and heroic scenes of the struggle and to pore deeply over the details of the work, organization, discipline etc. of the Akali Jathas, which gladly gave their blood in defence of their seats of worship. It was a heroic example of the non-violent battles between the people and the Government in India; and the knowledge which Gopalakrishna gained in the Punjab—alas! has been lost.

Secondly, the Flag Fight at Nagpur was a thing which was still-born. Gopalakrishna's views on our "National Flag" have already been mentioned in an earlier chapter; and it is enough to state here that, whatever its incidental gains, the Nagpur movement of 1923 was, in its fundamental aspects, self-condemned. For on the one hand, its chief sponsors had agreed to dilute and compromise even the Gandhian "Tricolour and Charka", by accommodating, if need be, the Union Jack alongside the Tricolour Ensign; and, on the other, if the Nagpur fight had any real and lasting vitality in it, the question of a 'National Flag' would not be hanging in the balance to this day. It is therefore, no wonder that Gopalakrishna was not over-enthused over its rehearsals at Nagpur; and thanks to the inanity of a suspicious Government which was afraid of its own shadow, the movement was allowed to rest after a supposed victory.

The third thing alone, viz. the schism in the Congress ranks was the main work which Gopalakrishna had to confront in his new role. He was still a No-changer by his party-label; and besides had a good deal of loyalty to Gandhiji lingering in his mind. On the other hand, he was neither bigoted nor harsh with the Swarajists, who might be erring,—still they were our men;—and, too, he realised the hollowness of the No-change pretensions. The No-changers were in a majority in the Congress and the new Party had the double disadvantage of having to fight Gandhism without the presence of Gandhiji; because if he had been free, he could have perhaps kept his followers in check, as, in fact, he did later on. But Mr. Das was determined to fight it out to the end; and the No-changers were equally resolved to root out all Swarajism and replace it by an undiluted Boycott of councils, schools and courts, in the Congress Resolutions, if not exactly in the Indian life.

Gopalakrishna had to steer the Congress between these two opposing forces in the country; and if the Congress could survive that ordeal, not a little credit was due to the work of Gopalakrishna in those days. And, as a matter of fact, by the time he laid down the reins of the Congress office at the end of the year, both the wings were brought together, under what has come to be known as the Cocanada Compromise. We shall now examine some details as to how it was brought about.

In the Nagpur A.I.C.C., it might be remembered that it was decided to hold a Special Session of the

Congress at Bombay. Immediately after, a requisition from 31 members of the A.I.C.C. reached the Secretary for convening another meeting of the A.I.C.C. to reconsider the venue of the Special Congress and shift it from Bombay to a more neutral place. The A.I.C.C. met at Vizagapatam for the purpose; and, as the President of the Bombay Provincial Congress Committee (Mrs. Sarojini Naidu) was reluctant to have the Congress at Bombay, Delhi was selected in its stead; and the Special Congress itself came off at that place in September 1923, where the following Resolution was passed.

“While reaffirming its adherence to the principle of Non-violent Non-cooperation, this Congress declares that.....Congressmen.....are at liberty to stand as candidates.....and this Congress suspends all propaganda against entering the Councils.”

From September to December, and the scene shifts from Delhi to Cocanada. The elections were in the meanwhile, over; and, in spite of heavy odds, the Swarajists had scored considerable success at the polls. The controversial items had thus passed out of the range of practical politics when the Cocanada Congress had met; and Gopalakrishna began his A.I.C.C. work there in high hopes.

In November 1923, while he was on his way to Ahmedabad to attend a meeting of the Congress Working Committee, Gopalakrishna expressed himself to a Press interviewer thus:

“Perhaps a revaluation or transvaluation of all values is to be effected by the leaders of thought and action of all communities, so as to hit upon a real living formula that can unify or create us into a homogeneous Indian Nation. This is a stupendous and profound work, which the flippant mediocrity of the present day public life is incompetent to undertake. ....But why is it that we are constantly treated to Khaddar, its charms and virtues; to Khaddar, its hopes and fears; to Khaddar and Khaddar and nothing more? Is it because it is the most colourless of all the items of the constructive programme that it is constantly harped upon?..... I do not underestimate the importance of khaddar but the more important item of the constructive programme, nay, the *sine qua non* of any further success of Non-cooperation is declared by Mahatma Gandhi to be Unity and Untouchability.....There seems to be a conspiracy of silence amongst all Congress workers regarding this, due either to the immensity of the task or their incapacity or incompetence to tackle it.....An attempt at least as profound as that of Guru Nanakji and as great as that of Akbar Badsha should now be undertaken to effect the unified Indian National life. Anything short of it is a confession of failure and unworthy of Mahatmajji's aim. Let all patriots put their heads together and take to this work, however stupendous it may be, at once, and without any hesitation.....Let the Hindus admit Allah as one of the Avatars and the Koran as one of their Puranas and welcome the Musalmans into the brother-hood of a new living homogeneous Indian Society; and let the Musalmans in their turn

welcome the Hindu as the new convert into his great democratic brother-hood. Let the Congress summon on the pain of India's peril, all the Maulanas and Pundits to contrive a formula of religious and social synthesis which can save mankind from the present distractions and discord.....Adwaitism or realisation of fundamental Oneness of all Life must be beaten into the minds and hearts of our people..... Unity alone can save us. Pro-changer or No-changer he must aim at this. He must even think of a catastrophic recasting of society. The time is ripe for it. Every other thing is an empty shibboleth. And the Cocanada Congress will justify itself if it faces this problem of the imminent social revolution in the country”.

Early next month, on the eve of the Cocanada Congress, Gopalakrishna sent out an appeal, from which the following are extracts. After alluding to the “reversal at Bardoli”, he proceeded; “khaddar is good enough routine for the daily ablution, but it is not potential of again launching us on the war-path. A strong and almost catastrophic stimulus is needed to release the spirit for the great responsibility that awaits it. Age-long fetters are now to be broken, and broken mercilessly.....Yes. The Congress has to undertake it.....Unity and untouchability are the two items.....that hold potentialities of restarting the Nation on its onward march. They are, in fact, one and the same thing.....

“The removal of untouchability is to be interpreted in a comprehensive manner. To the Hindu



it enjoins the immediate purging of this age-long sin and stigma. To the Musalman it argues religious tolerance. ....To the zealous Christian it represents the fact of the existence of many a Broker other than the Christ to the divine audience. To the capitalist it declares economic justice towards his humble labourers.....It will be a social revolution galore. Fancy, a complete coalescence of all castes, and yet this is the real import of this item of the constructive programme. It is a stupendous task indeed. Shall we undertake it? Can we undertake it? But can we, indeed, refuse to undertake it?.....The Congress shall be asked to take up this great social problem. If, by contrivance, the spirit is released from age-long social bonds into the free atmosphere of unimpeded self-expression in its nascent impetuosity, it can blow up all empires of egoism that have desecrated God's beautiful earth."

And yet a little later, he wrote: "I am thinking furiously of the social problem. A sense of oneness, oneness that is a real identity and not a polite acknowledgment of democratic courtesy, nor a mere equationing of a goody-goody 'constructive' ethic; oneness whereby one understands one's self as అణోరణీయాన్: సహతోమహీయాన్. This can impart an intrepidity and power to the soul in the moment of release. Why should we not usher in such a moment? Can we? Can't we? Let *me* at least, say Yes. But it is a stupendous thing, very risky to mind and limb, impossible for us to achieve, etc. etc. True! But somebody should do it. Why not I? Why should I not at least begin? I did begin, in my own

humble manner, by instituting a Providence in Ramanagar.....

“.....My view of our social reorganisation is a more integrated and synthetic one than any current now. I want to create and not merely reform or re-novate.

“We see so much social inequity, and injustice and chaos. If we who imagine we *know*, continue to live as we did, it is monstrous. That is the problem in its simplest form. Isolated though we be, nobodys though we may turn out to be, we shall at least have the satisfaction of being true to ourselves and can leave this world with an easy mind when the final call comes forth. I am not wedded to any dogma, I am not sold to any doctrine, I am ever open—provocatively open—but I insist on something tangible being done at least in our lives by way of social rectitude”.

The main contribution of the Cocanada Congress was the emergence of an All India Khaddar Board, which later on developed into the All India Spinners' Association, which was really an *Imperium in imperio*. And in view of its importance, at least a passing mention to its antecedents is essential at this stage.

The Constructive Programme was the hegemony of the Non-cooperation Congress, and on his release from jail, Gopalakrishna became an ardent votary of the 'New Testament'. He, however, took

care to interpret this programme in the spirit of a call to create a new Nation, a new Society in India, based on the principle of a fundamental Oneness of all communities and creeds, nay of all the universe as the manifestation of "the one Brahman, the one Brahman"; and he declared himself as a humble servant of a new Brahmanism which, he promised, would automatically lead India, nay the world, a long way ahead, say a thousand or two thousand years from the present quagmire of stagnation and misery. And to make good his long association with the National Congress, he coquetted with that august body and its workers for sometime to assist him in his work, and thus was attempting to pour new wine—the new Brahmanical wine—into the old Congress bottles. He felt that the Swarajist-No-change split in the Congress was an unfortunate rift in the lute and, to avert it and to prepare the Congress for achieving that Unity which was an essential preliminary for an all-round social unification, he volunteered to help a settlement; and, it must be said to his credit that, during the six months of his Congress office, he averted what might otherwise have proved a complete rupture. And at the Cocanada Congress, now that both the wings had been united, he hoped that they would all get to work at a really creative social programme. It was thus that he was looking up to the Cocanada Congress with great expectancy.

Gopalakrishna asked for bread: but the Congress could give him only a stone! The achievement of social unity, removal of untouchability and the

laying out of strong and living foundations for the future edifice of Swaraj—this was what Gopalakrishna aspired to achieve through the Cocanada Congress; but instead, a most colourless and commonplace Khadi Board, as futile in its purpose, as it was out of taste with the rich cultural genius of the country, was what the Cocanada Congress could produce! The mountain laboured and brought forth a mouse! No wonder, that Gopalakrishna felt chilled at the end of the Congress sessions and exclaimed: “Another dry year stares us in the face!.....The sword-wielding arm of Shaukat Ali is henceforward to dance to the Charka music (for the Big Brother was one of the members of the newly formed Khaddar Board). It is grand. But a thousand pardons. Is it all? Shall we not allow some honest prose?.....I am never tired of emphasising that Mahathmaji’s emphasis on Khaddar is but an *Ardhavadam* only to serve as an incentive for securing the irreducible minimum of observance of the particular Dharma. When it is construed to be the only *Vidhi*—desideratum—the bureaucracy is given another lease of self-satisfaction, and the Congress of self-stultification. National susceptibilities demand a life-furthering and not merely a life-lingering programme. Khaddar may stay the life of Non-cooperation. But that is all. To reduce the Nation into an armed camp to engage the mighty bureaucracy arrayed against us, and ever alert to give battle, some catastrophic stimulus, something infinitely more dynamic and devastating than the charka sound must be found. The idea of Unity—Unity inter-communal and inter-religious—is potential of this.”

Even in other respects, the Cocanada Congress resulted only in deep disappointment to Gopalakrishna.

Thus, at the time of the Congress sessions, though Gopalakrishna was busily engaged with his Secretarial duties, he made a unique proposal, viz., of holding the *Sapthaham* or the 'Seven Days' Feast', the principal part of which, as a Hurrah to God, is the free feeding of the lakhs of visitors attending the function. This is quite a common religious affair in the country; but out of its novelty in the Congress circles, at any rate, a word of explanation might be attempted on the subject.

The Congress every year attracts a couple of thousands of delegates from all parts of the country, besides a hundred thousand or more from the province where the annual sessions is held. And, Gopalakrishna suggested that all the delegates and, if possible, even the visitors should be given a free feed during the Congress-week, and that the expenses be met by donations in kind.

The *Sapthaham* is a well-known religious function in our country; and the system of providing "hotels" for selling food during the Congress sessions was entirely alien to the genius and traditions of the land, where *Bhutha-Yajna* is supposed to be one of the fundamental five *Yajnas* of every religious house-holder. The Congress, as in the previous years, was accustomed to arrange "hotels" where food is sold, owing presumably to the practice of its original inspirers, viz. the British commercia-

lists, and Gopalakrishna condemned the idea as unworthy of Indian idealism and he wanted that the free kitchen tradition should be revived in order to spiritualise our Congress life and make it a veritable *Thirtha*, —a real place of pilgrimage for the India's teeming millions. He gave the idea to the Congress leaders of Bezwada at the time of the A.I.C.C. meeting in March 1921; and he gave it again at the time of the Cocanada Congress for their consideration as worthy of the rich traditions of the traditional Andhras. But the idea was received coldly by the unimaginative leaders of the Bezwada Reception Committee; and those of Cocanada proved no less venerable than their Bezwada compatriots.

The idea of providing thousands and tens of thousands of men, women and children with free meals for a week was a unique one; and, if Gopalakrishna had been free from the shackles of Congress office, he could certainly have done something to make the scheme a success. But when he actually suggested the idea, in the course of a conversation with the 'Bombay Chronicle', the calculating captains of the Congress Reception Committee higgled about it for a while and at last gave it a decent burial. But even then, we feel, they counted it without the host, for the very same Cocanada Congress was forced to give a free kitchen to the nearly 2,000 volunteers who gave their services freely to the Congress; and also 4,000 of the Congress delegates and workers were feasted on the evening of the last day, and the "principle" was thus intro-

duced which was perhaps no mean victory. That the Congress, to this day, is unable to universalise this tradition shows how deeply rooted the 'National' movement is in foreign ideas and inspiration; and even the efforts of a Gopalakrishna to revive, through the Congress, our ancient traditions had been quite unavailing.

The same conclusion must be irresistibly drawn from the fact that the Cocanada Congress even more effectively betrayed the Ramadandu idea in the organisation of the Congress volunteers. The Congress, being an organisation having frequently to assemble large concourses of people, had to experiment in mass direction and control; and for the conducting of every Conference or Congress not to speak of the ultimate steps of mass civil disobedience and universal non-payment of taxes, a sort of trained volunteerism became necessary, for which purpose various forms were devised by the various Congressional agencies, the most favoured being the earlier Scout-idea; the later 'Hindusthanee Seva Dal'; and the all-pervading volunteer corps-ism. And it will serve a useful purpose if we examine them a little in this context.

To take up the last first. Volunteerism is the most important of these Congressional endeavours in martialling the man-power of the country,—in fact, the genus, the root-stock-in-idea, from which the Scout and the Seva Dal are but typical species. We have got, therefore, to look at this 'volunteer'—idea a little more closely.

The 'volunteer', it is well-known, is a limb of the western military organisation, being that part of the army which, as apart and distinct from the standing militia or the trained mercenary, was recruited in times of travail, *on a voluntary basis*, from the mass of the people, for the rescuing of the Nation at its hour of trial and danger. And the most important point to remember about it is that the "volunteer" also is an "armed animal", fully equipped with deadly weapons, engaged in killing and getting killed, alongside the regular Army; and the organisation was distinctly martial, as apart from the Red Cross or other such purely peaceful associations of the West, intended for the health and the healing of the maimed and the dying among the wounded soldiery.

Now this was the *idea* which our National Congress had taken up in its "peaceful and legitimate" efforts to establish Swaraj in India; and while its voluntary basis has been adopted *in toto*, even to the extent of its votaries being not only non-paid, but even non-fed and starved (e.g. look at the famous Ahmedabad pledge for these volunteers), the organisation was non-violenced and the volunteer deprived of his arms! In other words, our leaders borrowed a product of the pure military life of the West; and in their eagerness to reach their goal by more "righteous" means than those of the "atrocious" and "barbarous" modernity, they cut off the arms of this equally militant volunteer, who **has**, therefore, come to us as the bare trunk without the arms, who **has** to receive all the lathi blows and the



bullet wounds and yet not retaliate, nor even suffer manfully, as in the truly Indian *Bhagavatha-Marga*. (Vide Gopalakrishna's Volunteer Address).

Thus our recent Volunteerism is one other of the western forms which our 'nationalistic' India has striven to adopt and ineffectually imitate because at least of its half-hearted importation. And this accounts why an alien *Raj* in India, which could easily grasp the inner *raison detre* of this Indian volunteerism, because it is based upon their own models and even couched in their language—"volunteers", "war-councils", "dictators", raids, marches and what not,—could easily put it down and virtually succeed in breaking open the 'nationalistic front' in India in almost all cases. Because it is their own organisation *minus* its arms, they could easily detect its motive; because it was powerless, they could break it up by a simple section 144 or gagging order or a declaration of it as an unlawful assembly, following it up with a lathi charge, to which of course the volunteers would succumb. And the Indian imitation died much sooner than the western model, because, firstly, it is not based upon a genuine, purposive Life; and secondly, as it always happens in such cases, the adoption of the superficial democratic aspects which were part and parcel of those original models, was more complete than in the case of the originals themselves; so much so that the leader or the commander-in-chief in the West survives to the last, to strike the final blow or sing the swan-song and die in the case of ordinary warfare, while in our national volunteerism, no

sooner is the 'battle' begun than every organisation is declared free to appoint "dictators" and authorised to nominate "successors"; and the whole thing, to our mind, seems a ludicrous adaptation of a western militarist principle, which is as unrighteous in its origin, as it is ineffectual in actual practice. No wonder, therefore, that what was merely a *volunteer-corps* in the scheme of western life, has become more or less a life-less volunteer-corps movement in India, so ardently followed by the votaries of our neo-Nationalism and so successfully crushed by the minions of British Raj in every province and in every district.

From the volunteer *corpses* to the Hindusthanee *Sevadals*, it is but a step; for the one is an imitation with the original name in English intact, while the *Sevadals* are an exact, nay a fuller expression of this slave-principle, for it is well-known that a corpse is called a *Sevam* ( శవము ) in our language. And it is a bit of tragic irony that the land which has produced a Ramadandu should have given sanction to these *Sevadalamulu*—these lifeless corpses;—because, it may be remembered that this 'Hindusthanee Sevalal' was the direct off-shoot of the Resolution IV of the Cocanada Congress, which, "in order to train the people of India and make them effective instruments for the carrying out of the national work", welcomed the movement "for the formation of an 'All India Volunteer Organisation', viz. the Hindusthanee Sevalal. And the inglorious career which has attended this movement since its inception at the time of the Cocanada

Congress, in spite of the active backing up by the Congress bodies, is perhaps worthy of its foreign inspiration; and, after a recent effusion into the formation of a Women's Branch of the Dal in 1930, which yielded some fine prey to the British jails, the movement has practically ebbed away at the first sight of the 'enemy' during the recent second shock. But, Bravo! Dr. Hardiker! We wish you and your Sevalal better luck next time, though success, we shall leave either to the Britisher who so richly deserves it because of the indirect homage which all of *you* are paying him, or to organisations that are more silent at present, not because they are dead in the core, like your volunteer corpses, but because they are more discreet and determined not to play any longer to the tune of the enemy!

And Scouting! That valiant plant (like the croton trees) of our Theosophist friends, of whom our Mr. Iyyanki Ramanayya was perhaps the first and last convert in Andhra. We do not know if scouting will receive hereafter in India that universal homage, which at least, its authors (both British and Indian) wish it should have. But as some of our schools and colleges—the former particularly—are experimenting with the scout idea on a large scale, in its two-fold aspect of the boy-scout and the girl-guide, we may yet have a garden of these fruitless, flowerless, infructuous shrubs, which may please the eye because of some colour which they possess; but their whistles are as shrill as our harmoniums and their batons are as lifeless as our gramophones. We believe the Scout-idea has been conceived for our

Indian mendicants in order to perpetuate the British domination over India; because the scout-stick can but render homage, at best form a guard-of-honour, to the mighty British Arms, which, however, either the Sword or the Rifle, our Indian fellow *subjects* dare not aspire after—at least for a good bit of time to come, i.e. to say, till our slavery becomes deep-rooted, chronic, and proof even for guns or ammunition.

We have already discussed the subject of Gopalakrishna's Ramadandu in an earlier chapter, and the reader may remember its presence at Bezwada, as early as March 1921, at the time of the A.I.C.C. meeting. It was banned at first from an official participation in the Congress Reception; but after the volunteer organisation had become a miserable failure, Gopalakrishna was asked to rescue the meeting, which he did in a wonderful manner with the help of his Ramadandu. He followed this preliminary success by establishing its usefulness and popularity in his famous Chirala-Perala campaign, and the great success with which he revived it both as an incentive to vigorous, albeit peaceful, action and as an effective control of the forces of enthusiasm, is borne out not only by the verdict of history, but by the unsolicited testimony of many an impartial observer, like the late Mr. C.R. Das, Mahatma Gandhi, the Ali Brothers, Mr. S. Sreenivasa Iyengar, Swami Shradhananda etc. In fact, Ramadandu became a classical tradition in Andhra; and it is no wonder, therefore, if the President-elect of the Cocanada Congress, the late Maulana Mohamad Ali,

as soon as he alighted at the Samalkot Railway station, greeted his distinguished hosts with the Query: "Where is your Red Army?" meaning the Andhra Ramadandu, robed in red colour!

It was of course open to the Cocanada Reception Committee—nay, it was perhaps their duty—to have called in the Red Army for taking charge of the work of the Congress Reception; because, Ramadandu was the one traditional Andhra organisation; Gopalakrishna showed it to be a wonderful success in recent times; the Committee could afford the expense for its uniforms etc;—actually, they spent over Rs. 20,000 on their 'volunteers';—and there was absolutely no other rival group or groups to choose between. And the adoption of Ramadandu would have enhanced their glory, as Andhras!

But when the actual time for organisation came, the Reception Committee, just as they excused themselves over the *Sapthaham* scheme also gave up the Ramadandu idea—or rather, they did not think of it at all—so blind and unimaginative, in fact, they had become;—and instead, they raised a cumbersome volunteer organisation, with its khaki shirts and the famous 'Gandhi cap' in place of the Andhra Turban. For this exhibition, we are tempted to ask, how was khaki dearer, or at least nearer their traditional colour, which was the illustrious Red of the Ramadandu robes; and how the flat 'Gandhi cap', despite its simplicity and even its cheapness, was more national or at least more beautiful and be-

coming to a 'national volunteer corps' than the flowing waves of a curling turban.

One argument which was subsequently raised against Ramadandu by that other moving figure of the Cocanada Congress, our esteemed Sjt. Bulusu Sambamoorthy,—is that Ramadandu being a product of the 'Hindu' tradition, might be unacceptable to the Muslims, the Sikhs and other religious denominations in the land, because they would, in that case, insist upon their own variations in the national organisation. The criticism is a serious one; and therefore, we are bound to answer it at this stage.

But before going to the point directly, we may be pardoned for asking what these critics of the Ramadandu idea had themselves achieved to bring about a Hindu-Muslim-Sikh etc., Unity in their volunteer organisation. For at the self-same Cocanada Congress, the Sikhs had come all the way from the Punjab to exhibit their Akali Jathas, with their flowing beards, black turbans and short kirpans,—all honour to them, who are the one community in India which has made itself an exception to the British Arms Act, by which one-fifth of the humanity was unarmed in one stroke, and, to this day, the Sikhs constitute one-third of the Army in India;—and even their free kitchens ( *ਬੰਦੋਬਸਤ* )! Yet not one of these Sikh friends would join our Congress Volunteerism! Then, again, there were our Mohemmadan fellow-countrymen, who constitute but a very small per cent of Andhra; yet they wouldn't join the blessed 'National' Volunteers,

and had instead their own 'Khilafat Volunteers' among whom possibly there were a few Hindus, and even their independent Khilafat Flag!

So, we say, those who criticised the Ramadandu as sectional or communal could not achieve anything other than a sectional organisation in practice; and their so-called 'Nationalism' is but a hallucination of their brains! Yet we would be untrue to ourselves and to the Ramadandu cause, if we should try to snub its critics by merely pointing the finger of scorn at their own non-achievement, though one is certainly entitled to ask what the detractors themselves have done or are doing at the shrine of the so-called All India National Volunteerism. We will, therefore put in the case for Ramadandu more positively and definitely, so that all further criticism against it on the ground of first principles may be effectively silenced.

The *Bhagavad Gita*, the most sacred of our scriptures says: "It is best to follow one's own Law of Being; it is death to follow an alien Dharma". And the dictum is binding even where a *Swadharma* is colourless and ineffectual; while a *Paradharma*, which may even be full of colour and quality, has got to be eschewed—is positive death itself—is full of *Bhayam*—i.e. has got to be dreaded like Hell!

And yet our friends of the National Congress discard their own native and traditional form of the Ramadandu organisation, which is, mark, not a colourless, fruitless form, but the most rich of colour







and rich of substance also, in fact its achievement being incomparably greater than that of any other organisation in Andhra,—nay, even outside Andhra, stimulating, like the sun, a Savarkar in his exile; a Sraddhananda to work up his Hanumandal and Maha Viradal; and even our latest Satyagrahis to their *Vamarasena*, which is but an apologetic adaptation of our glorious Ramadandu ideal,—and they follow the most useless stuff from the West, in an almost hybrid and *mutilated* form!

And, we say, this fundamental Gita stand-point is the prime justification for our Ramadandu.

Gopalakrishna's idea of these volunteers, it may be remembered, was not an aggressive one, in the sense that it wanted to efface the other systems or religions from this globe; but he desired that each should form a unit on the basis of one's own denominational outlook and faith;—the Hindus forming their Ramadandu; Christians their Red Cross; Muslims their Mahfuzl Islam; the Sikhs their Akali Jatha; and, under their local or sectional leaders, these units should function, in quiet comraderie, as one man, because their purpose is one, viz. health and healing, freedom and salvation. Thus in an army of 1,000 Hindus and 100 Muslims, say, you might form 50 units of the Ramadandu and 5 of the Mahfuzl Islam, and all the 55 units shall march in one line, side by side, to liberate their country or to relieve humanity of its woes. But our Congress friends have missed this essential fact of Life, viz. the value of one's traditional idealism in the working of

our organisations; and they have been blindly attempting to work up an elaborate scheme of trained volunteerism, which is fast becoming one other of the many castes and creeds of India; and all their busy Boards and plans of training, disciplining, equipping and journalling, may fully occupy their time and the time of other idlers in the country; but it is very much doubtful if any of those things shall avail either for *Swaraj* or *Swaaraj*.

We have lingered so long on the absence of the Ramadandu at the time of the Cocanada Congress, because it offers a crucial test about the life and worth of our foreign-inspired, 'national' gatherings. We will now relate another performance of the Andhra leaders at the self-same Cocanada Congress, which shows the same lack of faith and want of culture, and which elicited the following comment from Gopalakrishna's hands. Speaking of the Belgam Congress of 1924, Gopalakrishna thus wrote in his 'Sadhana'. "It is a welcome relief that the Chairman uttered his speech in his own tongue.....His instinct exercised itself straight and with taste. It was only given to the Andhras, the opportunity of betraying themselves and their own language and literature. Translations can explain the thought, but the characteristic sound form alone reaches the soul."

The reference in the above to the "betrayal" of the Andhras was to Desabhakta K. Venkatappayya's performance, as Chairman of the Reception Committee at Cocanada in December 1923. That esteemed patriot read his welcome address in faltering

tones, in halting Hindi; and in spite of the daily rehearsals in the early hours of the morning for a fortnight or more—for we were eye-witness to those scenes—he floundered in the middle and broke it off after it was half-done and finished it with the aid of an English conclusion!

Gopalakrishna's main record of his Congress Secretaryship, we have already seen, was that he had successfully steered the A.I.C.C. through two meetings and two Congress sessions; and he had also done much to bring the two wings of the Congress to a close compromise at the Delhi and Cocanada sessions. For this no mean achievement, one would naturally expect that he would have had a chance of re-election as General Secretary, not only to see his political policy in full working order, but, and more chiefly, to give him an opportunity for inaugurating his social and religious programme from the helm of the Congress Executive. Because unification under the Congress lead and guidance was what he had been aspiring after; and, if but the Congress would help him, he hoped to score a mighty success!

The elections to the A.I.C.C. from the Andhra took place that year at Cocanada on the 13th November. There were twenty-four seats allotted for the Andhradesa, among which six were the so-called 'General seats', i.e. minorities and women. The remaining eighteen had to be chosen district by district, by the Provincial Congress Committee which met there for the purpose. Desabhakta Venkatapayya and Gopalakrishna had both been previously

representing the Guntur district on the A.I.C.C., but both of them were not present at the P.C.C. meeting, as they had to go to the Punjab on some Working Committee business. The elections at Cocanada, therefore, were in sole charge of Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya, whose constitutional knowledge, Congress experience, undoubted powers of intellect and of memory were well-known; and the House trusted in his fair-play.

When the question of elections for Guntur came, up rose the agile Doctor, and he explained to an ignorant but believing House that Messrs. Venkappayya and Gopalakrishna would, as the retiring President and General Secretary of the A.I.C.C., be members *ex-officio* of that august body; and just to enable a larger number of men from the Province to take part in the A.I.C.C. proceedings, that both their names be omitted and two fresh people elected to the two seats. One impudent member thereupon interrupted whether the Doctor was sure of it because Gopalakrishna, as the present General Secretary, not only running the Congress office, but even belonging to the Province where the Congress sessions was being held, would have a chance of reelection as General Secretary for the next year also. And the Doctor assured the House that the constitution fully provided for both of them to sit on the A.I.C.C. for the next year. and on that assurance, the House adopted two new names for the Guntur constituency, thus displacing both the Desabhakta and Gopalakrishna. It was a big hoax, as we shall see presently, for which the Doctor's cleverness has got to be congratulated.

For Article XIX of the Congress Constitution contains a clause to the effect that “the *ex-officio* members (of the A.I.C.C.) shall be the elected President, Past Presidents of the Congress,.....the General Secretaries and the Treasurers of the Congress”.

Desabhakta was not a “President of the Congress”, but only President of the A.I.C.C. for six months; therefore he himself was not entitled to sit on the new A.I.C.C. by virtue of the above clause.

And for Gopalakrishna. It is only the General Secretaries of the Congress who are newly elected for the year that shall be *ex-officio* members, and no provision is made for all the ex-General Secretaries to sit as perpetual members of the A.I.C.C.

This position the esteemed Doctor either did not know, or, if he knew it, he played false with the trust reposed in him by an ignorant and unsuspecting albeit gullible House, which readily swallowed his words and assurances.

The result was that when new names were to be proposed for the new Secretaryship of the A.I.C.C. at the time of the Cocanada Congress, Gopalakrishna's name was found missing on the list.

It was all done in the dark, when Gopalakrishna himself was away on Congress duty; and the seat of the Desabhakta was risked, we suppose, just to lend credulity to the entire diabolism.

Gopalakrishna thus lost his Secretaryship; but his Andhra compatriots could not profit themselves thereby. For there was a long-hallowed tradition in the Congress, whereby one of the Secretaries should be from the Province where the Congress sessions was held; and though Gopalakrishna himself was declared out, yet there were other luminaries from Andhra, who possibly could be found acceptable to the Congress, if only they had either the capacity or had exerted themselves in that behalf.

Gopalakrishna's was the one instance, in recent memory, when the A.I.C.C. office was brought to the Andhradesa; and at the Cocanada Congress, the Andhra leaders had shamefully betrayed themselves. Gopalakrishna himself gave expression to his feelings on this incident to a Press interviewer soon after the Cocanada Congress thus:—

“I am afraid, I am not very much in need just now for the Congress. Don't anticipate. I am not alluding to the clever kindness of our Provincial Congress Committee in wishing me off of its A.I.C.C. elections to a further term of Secretarial office in due sanctimonious observance of a time-honoured superstition.....If you can pardon a bit of my egoism, there is not a situation which can claim its toll from a person like myself and also there is not likely to be one until something turns up from far away. And there is also no knowing I haven't made a serious mistake in taking to politics. I wish to repair post-haste to the blissful regions of obscurity which would incidentally give me the much-needed rest and, who knows, clearer vision and a more appropriate vocation!”

## CHAPTER XXI.

## “From Politics to Obscurity”

Cocanada Congress had come and gone; No-change and Pro-change had met and compromised; but Gopalakrishna's dream of “a grand social convulsion” arising out of the Congress was as far from India in January 1924 as ever. The cessation of the A.I.C.C. Secretaryship meant for him a change, definitely and for good, from All-India politics to more domestic matters, mostly relating to himself and his province. The spell of an all India hypnotism having thus gone from his mind, he had now to face the realities of a failing health, starving home and a struggling, disunited and almost lifeless province; and, therefore, he decided to “repair post-haste” from politics to “obscurity”, i.e. to say from the distinguished heights of an All-India Congress leadership to the more obscure ranks of an Andhra career.

A new orientation had thus come upon him after the Cocanada Congress, and from the ploughing of the arid sands of an “Indian nationalism”, in which probably he never believed, he now definitely withdrew himself to the humbler, yet more vital tasks of building up from within, reducing gradually his “area of operations” from all-India to the Andhradesa and ultimately he declared; “Perhaps I don't move out of Ramnagar—for any propaganda in particular”. “The process is now to fix myself up in Ramnagar; and everything else will turn out



right afterwards". "I of yesterday want to die; and I of tomorrow if that is to be, wish to be a fresher on this planet". "I attempted many things and all have been miserable failures. That is a good enough achievement. Nothing else I could have done." "I do stand lonely and isolated but even so I am happy. For is there any 'society' worthy our aspiration? decent enough to look out for? I am not sorry we have none." "I shall look forward to further isolate myself in public as well as in private life. I won't have anything to do with anything. Congress, Swaraj Party, all I have decided to abandon. I want to extinguish myself as a political species and I shall go any length in accomplishing it."

The story of Gopalakrishna during the four and odd years of his life succeeding the Cocanada Congress, from a real standpoint is the grandest portion of his life, for it deals mainly with his soul. True, there are no mock-heroics here, no grand achievements, no big incidents and actions like Chiralaperala, no aspirations even which will attract the crowd or enchant an audience, even the very flesh is parched up and the blood run dry; but to the gaze of the real, it forms the most wonderful of human stories, and underneath his outer inaction, there was an inner Reality—a deeper, dynamic action—which simply marched on, from stage to stage in the path of the pilgrim;—and starting from pure 'ego', which had perhaps held in the interior of its structure a mere reflex of the abiding Atman, he went on, like the chemist, refining and melting the ore till at last

he arrived at the stage when he was face to face with the Gold, which, in this case, was God Himself and made Him the master-passion—the “One Word” as he used to call it—in life; and, in the giving up of his life, in the end, we will find a true triumph of the Soul!

The process, however, was a gradual one; and, from January 1924 to June that year was a period of intense outer activity; despite his determination in fact, it may be described as a ‘Period of Conferencing’ in his life, because there was no other period when he attended or took active part in so many conferences and public gatherings as during this period.

There were two reasons for this external activity about this time.

First was the sudden and unexpected release of Mahatma Gandhi in January 1924, owing to serious illness. Gandhiji was sentenced in March 1922 for six years imprisonment; but in January 1924, the Government of Bombay ordered his release when he fell seriously ill with appendicitis.. A wave of enthusiasm spread all round in the country; and, in Andhradesa in particular, it was proposed that the occasion should be fittingly celebrated by the collection of a lakh of Rupees as “*Gandhi Puja Nidhi*” or a purse in honour of Gandhiji, and Gopalakrishna had his own part to play in this collection work.

But there was also an inner reason for his participation in the wider public life at this time. For,

it may be remembered that as soon as he came out of jail in 1922, he went round the Andhra districts, carrying aloft the Banner of Brahmanism; but his A.I.C.C. career intervened with his work and throughout the year 1923 he had no occasion to take up this work any further. And after his rude shock in the A.I.C.C. career in December 1923, he felt the need to go back 'from Politics to obscurity', which, to him, meant a retirement from the outer political buzz, with a view to the mobilizing of all national forces on a broad and integrated basis. Thus he found the need to apply himself to such activities, besides the Congress, as the Volunteers, the Library movement, journalism, and even the Local Boards and Legislative Councils.

The first Conferences presided over by Gopalakrishna in the early months of 1924 were two or three Taluk gatherings of his own district, held at Bapatla, Repalle and probably Guntur; and they were all in connection with the Gandhi Purse collections. In every place, he exhorted his hearers to the usual khaddar, Constructive Programme, Removal of Untouchability, 'Mahatma Gandhiki Jai'; and, in every place, he was responsible for the appointment of a small *Deeksha Sangham* i.e. a Committee of five or six members, who were pledged to raise the prescribed quota of Rs. 5 or 6,000 from the Taluk and not to return home till the work was finished. The members were to go from village to village, and from door to door, with *Bhajana* and music, continuously for two or three months at a stretch. Detailed instruc-

tions were laid down for the people of each village to receive these 'Public beggars' with due honours and the *Sree mukham* issued under his Presidential authority was, both in theory and in practice, as mighty and inviolable as the Royal Instrument of Instructions itself, while in point of piquancy and religious colour, the command was almost unrivalled. It was no wonder, therefore, that, in the taluks where he gave the lead, even dead villages began to animate; and while all the twelve or thirteen districts of Andhra combined did not raise more than 15 or 16 thousand Rupees for the fund, Gopalakrishna alone, with the aid of these *Deeksha Sanghams* in two or three taluks, could collect within a short time, more than Rs. 8,000! The instance is noteworthy to show how 'Religion reinforces our Politics!'

Another instance where Gopalakrishna succeeded and others failed was also in connection with the Gandhi-release. A day was fixed by the Congress as a day of thanks-giving for the release and recovery of Mahathmaji; and curiosity drove him from Chirala just to see how Bezwada—the Andhra capital—would celebrate the occasion. But what was his surprise when, after alighting at the station, through a lonely and almost deserted path-way to the 'Gandhi-Park' where barely a hundred men or two were assembled and almost dispersing after passing an empty Resolution of mere 'Thanks', unnoticed even by the passers-by in the street. The gathering was about to disperse at 6 or 6-30 p.m., when Gopalakrishna put in his appearance, and, after exchange

of a few greetings with the elite he walked up to the dais and announced in his own characteristic and inimitable manner, that the proceedings would be adjourned till next evening, when greater numbers should muster strong to do homage to the Mahatma, and that, in the meanwhile, a "Gandhi Prabha" would go round the city the next day.

A 'Prabha' literally means 'Greatness' or 'Fame'. It is a well-known religious term in this part of the country, and stands for a huge, moving frame-work, built of wood or iron rods, in the form of a semi-oval arch and pasted with variegated coloured cloths and some picture or pictures. The picture of some God is always carried on the Prabha, particularly of that Being, whose greatness that particular structure was intended to glorify, and it is His *Prabha* or Fame that is carried aloft, on human shoulders, from door to door and from village to village, with music and Bhajana, and the pious populace freely give their devout offerings to God—the rich out of their riches, the poor out of their poverty. The idea, in fact, is so very common in this part of the country that almost every villager knows the day of his village *Prabha*, and enjoys it fully as a festive day; and good *Prabhala-Thirthams* or the meeting-places of these Prabhas, where the individual gods resolve their individual glory into the mightier Glory of the One, indivisible God-hood, are the rendezvous for thousands, sometimes even lakhs of pilgrims, and they even serve as places for the barter or exchange of many an article of daily use for the people.

Now, it was such a Day that Gopalakrishna conceived for the celebration of the Gandhi Triumph—the emergence really of a Gandhi spirit from out of the portals of the British jails and even of death—and he wanted those who were gathered there to build a Gandhi-Prabha, i.e. a Prabha in honour of Gandhiji, with his Photo seated on it, and led in procession through the city, with music and song, receiving *Arathis* (or Light-offerings), rice, fruits, flowers and coin, enroute from almost every house. The whole city thus became a gala day, as it were, and by the evening, not only every citizen knew of Gandhiji's triumph, and had rendered his humble homage or at least a respectful *Darshan* of the semblance of the great Mahatma; but the Congress Committee got a handsome eight or nine Hundred rupees for the *Gandhi Puja Nidhi*, and at least a 10,000 people mustered for the evening meeting and even the Police were there punctually that day (though they were absent the previous evening); and no wonder if Gopalakrishna humorously alluded to the previous day's performance as a "tame affair" where not even our "widowed cousin", the C.I.D., was present!

It was in April 1924 that Gopalakrishna was invited to preside over the first Godavari District Volunteer Conference held at Alamur alongside the district political and other conferences; and the Presidential Address delivered by him on the occasion makes thoughtful reading. Glorious scenes were witnessed in the Conference which it is impossible to adequately portray here; but reference may be

made to one aspect of it, where Gopalakrishna, in a solemn and impressive manner, burned camphor to the gods on high, uttered his usual *Sreemad Ramaramana Govindo Hari* and made his audience mutter the *Mantra*, and, with a plate of red *Kunkuma* in his hand, he made every one of them wear the 'caste-mark' before the proceedings commenced, and thus fitted them to share the function with their true 'nationality' about them. And in view of its importance alike to the story of Gopalakrishna as to the wider life in the country a brief explanation of its significance may be attempted here.

The Britishers in the West—being a "Nation of shop-keepers" evidently—have got their Trade-marks; while we, in India, have got our "caste-marks" on the fore-head of every one of us which are, in a real sense, the index of one's character, temperament and out-look on life; and the Red-mark on the forehead, which, we suppose, is the token of the shedding of one's red blood—which, in other words, means the giving up, of one's own ego, the ever-baneful selfishness, in the service of God's Cause—has come to be a distinguishing feature of every Hindu man or woman (excepting the widow, who rarely wears the mark of a white dust, indicative of the ashes of her deceased husband); and it has occupied an integral part in the structure of our society-building in India, occupying now such a prominent position in it that we might verily say: "Tell me your mark; and I will tell you your nature."

In recent times, however, such outside shocks have come from abroad and such degenerating changes have occurred in our own society that the 'Red mark' has undergone a number of transformations culminating in the 'Black-spot' of our present age, which is really a 'Black-mark', symbolic of our shame and degradation characteristic of the poisoned currents of our clogged up blood veins and arteries; and thus the caste-mark which should really be a symbol of a triumphant spirit, has come to mean an inglorious and corrupted 'Black-mark' on the face, expressive really of the national humiliation which has overtaken the whole race. And of late, too, there have been the alien forces of other systems coming into the country, for instance Islam and Christianity, which were both *anti-caste*, and, therefore, *anti-mark*; and our Bengalee current of a neo-socialism, viz. the Brahmo Samaj which, in its anxiety to do away with the caste-system altogether, had, in many cases, obliterated the caste-mark on the fore-head, and thus paved the way for the forces of an untrammelled materialism and gross self-interest, which are removed from the modern, western atheism only by a thin dividing wall of degree and not of kind. For the sign and symbol of sacrifice having gone out of the race—at least out of the active and leading part of our society—the field was free for an undiluted play of a narrow and egotistical self, sect or group interest and partisanship; and it is no wonder that even the recent attempts at our religious-reshaping, since the days of Raja Rama Mohan Roy, have only meant more or less religionised efforts often



masked with a good deal of the egotistical in man and have not been able to establish the completest surrender to the Soul. In other words, the increasing absence of any caste-mark in India, whether due to Islam, Christianity or the Brahm. Religion, has become, in fact, a colourless and stereo-typed artlessness, symbolic of the monotone of a lifeless dogma, an *arterio-sclerosis*, if not of a complete national death.

Now this was, on an average, the type of society which was gathered that day to hear Gopalakrishna at Alamur. Most of them that were there, were either out of caste or extinct of life altogether. And if Gopalakrishna could really do anything, he had first to purify them in mind, for which there was the sacred *Rama-Nam*; and the visible process of their 'reconversion' to Faith and Life was to supply the missing mark on the human face and redden the decoloured sign of one's own self-surrender. It was a happy augury for the function which followed—the conference itself was a great success—and it reminds one really of the days of old, when Sree Sankaracharya converted whole masses of mankind from the Buddhistic to the Brahminical Faith; and enmasse, we should think, that was the one and alas! the only one occasion when Gopalakrishna himself could attempt his glorious doctrine of Universal Brahmanism, for the work which he did that day was nothing short of a whole-sale conversion or turning of men's minds towards God or Brahman!

From Alamur Gopalakrishna proceeded to Madugula, to preside over the Vizagapatam District

Political Conference. That Conference was a purely political affair, assembled under the auspices of the District Congress Committee and its purpose was to work up the chief programme of the Congress policy which was summed up by the Bardoli Constructive Programme.

The Constructive Programme to which reference has already been made more than once, in these pages, was the off-shoot of Resolution III of the Congress Working Committee which met at Bardoli on the 11th and 12th February 1922 and *interalia*, it reads as follows. After suspending the Non-Co-operation movement:

“.....With a view of perfecting the internal organisation,

“The Working Committee advises all Congress organisations to be engaged in the following activities:—

- (1) To enlist at least one crore of members of the Congress:
- (2) To popularise the spinning wheel and to organise the manufacture of hand-spun hand-woven khaddar.
- (3) To organise national schools.
- (4) To organise the depressed classes for a **better life**

- (5) To organise the temperance campaign.
- (6) To organise village and town *Panchayats*.
- (7) In order to promote and emphasise Unity among all classes and races and mutual good-will, the establishment of which is the aim of the movement of non-cooperation, to organise a social service department that will render help to all irrespective of differences, in times of illness or accident.
- (8) To continue the Tilak Memorial Swaraj Fund collections”.

Gopalakrishna, in his own way, tried to interpret this programme to suit his own ideas. And on the question of Unity, he said: “The question of National Unity in our land is as old as the hills. Akbar the Great tried it. The great Nanak tried it. They tried to hit upon a formula, one political, one social, and other religious, to induce all discord, difference and division, to converge into a living homogeneity i.e. to a Unity with its diversity inhibited.” But his interpretation must have been unacceptable, in several respects, to many an erudite Congressman; and, therefore, he was careful to notice that the solution of that Unity is to be obtained on “other platforms than that of the Congress”.

In the same month, (May 1924) Gopalakrishna conducted a Ramadandu Rally or a Training class

for the Andhra Provincial Ramadandu at Kovvur on the shores of the Godavari river. The occasion of the Rally was the celebration of *Sree Rama Sapthaham* at Kovvur, where Bhajana and kirtan, music and song, minstrelsy and *Puja* (prayer and worship) during day and night, were continuously in sessions for an entire week. Thousands of visitors poured in every noon and night, and all the guests and visitors were freely fed during that week, the cost being borne by public charity. Gopalakrishna who came to know of it, readily decided to utilise it for the inculcation of the fundamentals of the Ramadandu idea among the Andhra youths; and, under the auspices of the Provincial Volunteer Board, he organised a Rally at Kovvur.

Gopalakrishna was at Kovvur in all for a fortnight, inspiring, instructing and guiding the whole scheme. Among those present were Sjts. Unnava Ramalingam Pantulu of Berhampore and G. Harisarthama Rao, both members of the Provincial Volunteer Board. The principal part of the Dandu work was the formation of the Dandu; the training of the "soldiery"; the hoisting of the Zenda (Flag) and the Flag worship or salutation; the initiation of the Dandu *Mantram*, and the "planting of the green bunch" and procession.

The Dandu was formed with about fifty or sixty workers who had volunteered from among the different districts of Andhra. A few sheds were erected for their accommodation in a garden adjoining the Andhra-Girvana Vidyalayam; and the training

included some 'scout'—drill; speeches; lectures; Bhajana; and at the end of the course, there was the function of dedication or consecration. The 'soldiers' were all taken to the river in the early hours of the dawn; and after a refreshing bath in its holy waters, a *Mantra* was given to each of the worshippers; and, after break-fast, the consecration ceremony was carefully planned and celebrated. For this purpose, a pillar was erected at the top of which a taste-fully decorated Flag—the *Hanumaddhwaja*—was raised; and everyone bowed before the Flag and saluted it.

An important incident of the day which must be noticed was the "planting of the green bunch". After their return from bath, these Dandu 'soldiers' were asked to snatch a bunch of green leaves plucked from the neighbouring garden and wear them one each on the breast. The "green bunch" evidently was the "Star" of the Ramadandu ranks and its significance was said to be as follows. The plant represents the great Tree of Life; each twig is typical of a human soul; the chopping of the twig from the Tree is symbolic of the human mind wrested from the ordinary, material path of a secular and bounded life and setting it free on the path of *Moksham*. The greenness is symbolic of the freshness of these nascent buds of Life; and these people hereafter were to walk with a beaming and merry freshness, like the tiny twigs adorning their breasts.

The Rally, had the honour of a visit by the late Swami Shraddhananda, who, we are told, was immensely pleased with the idea and the organisation.

Sometime during this period, Gopalakrishna also presided over the Andhradesa Libraries Conference held at Pamidipadu Agraharam, and his Address on the occasion is a profoundly interesting document and it received kindly greetings from the American Library Journal and other magazines connected with the Library movement, notwithstanding the fact that it set up a vigorous critic against the Library and the Museum habits of the present day practice.

The month of June 1924 for Gopalakrishna was mostly a period of hibernation, at Bezwada, interspersed, now and then, with plans of Chirala lands or financial worries, now of a chronic malaria, which possibly he picked up as early as 1921 in his trip to Anantapur, but which had taken deep root by this time; and, too, with subdued schemes of starting an English weekly and a Telugu daily paper, which, however, were receding farther and farther, the more he was trying to get near them.

Such, briefly, was his position on the eve of the July meeting of the Andhra Provincial Congress Committee (1924), which forms a land-mark in his career.

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## CHAPTER XXII

A.P.C.C. meeting of July 1924.

The July meeting of the Andhra Provincial Congress Committee was an important one from more than one stand-point; and it behoves us in this Story of Gopalakrishna to give it a more than passing mention.

It was the first meeting of the new Committee held for the year, and it was convened for the purpose of electing its office-bearers. These elections were annual and, ordinarily, should have been held much earlier in the year, in February or March; but, for their own reasons, the Executive had carried on for a full half-year and the new Committee met for the first time in 1924 on the 5th of July, at Bezwada.

The general conditions obtaining before the meeting were briefly as follows. After the suspension of the Non-cooperation movement and the return of the leaders and workers from jails in 1923, it was practically the first meeting in Andhradesa for taking fresh stock of the situation in the country. The year 1923 was spent in organising the Cocanada Congress—for which purpose the Congress-routine was practically suspended; and the release of the Mahatma inaugurated a new period of all-round activity throughout the country.

In the life of Gopalakrishna himself, the meeting served as an occasion for supreme introspection,

for he had abandoned himself in the Non-cooperation movement of 1921; and even after his return from jail, instead of reverting from politics to realities, he accepted the A.I.C.C. Secretaryship just at the time when he was planning for an honest and honourable means of livelihood—through his Press and papers, in July 1923; and, after pursuing the will—o’ the—wisp of the Congress unification, he became not only poorer in purse, but, owing to the interested intrigues of his No-change friends in Andhra, even discredited and maligned.

As an instance of this propaganda against Gopalakrishna may be cited the following letter of Gandhiji himself, addressed to Gopalakrishna about this time. Writing on 4—7—24 from Sabarmati, the Mahatma told Gopalakrishna: “I had a long chat with Desabhakta. He is of opinion that you will not work in an organisation. I do wish you will find yourself and your proper place in the movement”.

On the eve of the Provincial Congress Committee meeting, a band of these Andhra No-changers ranged themselves openly to vilify even the fair name of Gopalakrishna and thus disgrace him in the eyes of the A.P.C.C. for the purpose of hounding him out of the Congress circles, if it was possible. The House itself was fully packed by these determined members; and the rest of the gullible variety were being tutored about the misdeeds of Gopalakrishna!

At this stage, it has also got to be remembered that our political life of the time was itself ailing



from want of faith. Out of a Nation of two crores of Andhras, in 1921 a couple of hundreds had gone to jail—at best a thousand; and, when compared with the figures say of a northern town in Scotland of 10,000 souls which sent in the Great War, more than 1100 men actually to the front, it will be realised how really small was our aim and endeavour in the cause of National Freedom, engendered in 1921-22.

Even in July 1924, the conditions of “Thus far and no further” in matters of faith were continuing in the citadels of the Andhra Congress; and the President of the P.C.C. himself was, to quote his own words, still “progressing” in his inner faith; and in almost every case of importance, he was woefully relying upon the chief, who supplied the crutches for the weak-kneed leaders of Andhra.

Politics, thus, in 1921, was still a pastime; and though Gandhiji had lately introduced a little more seriousness into the game, it was still too far in Andhradesa, at any rate, from the position of a “Do or Die”, indicative of a full faith and determination on the part of an association aiming at “establishing Swaraj in India” in twelve months.

In July 1924, therefore, when all the Nation's captains were returned from jails, when Gandhiji himself was once more with us, when the country had waded through a Swarajist—No-change Civil War, and at Cocanada had just concluded an honourable compromise on both sides, it was naturally a time for stock-taking; and if our people were serious of

making an earnest effort for the restarting of the Nation on its path of self-realisation, it was but common-sense that the errors of the former fight should be eliminated, and the former faithlessness, wherever still lingering, given the go-bye; and a full, vigorous and buoyant and creative faith enthroned in its stead. At least this was the attitude with which Gopalakrishna approached the meeting, viz. either the sort of half-faith existing in the Andhra Congress should be ended; or, if that was not possible, that he himself should wash his hands off this show which, while it achieved little, still denied even the barest humanity for the "worker"

In the course of that meeting, Gopalakrishna made a clean breast of his whole mind, and, at the outset, explained that the country can be served not by any half-way-houses of semi-sacrifice or "suffering as much as possible" యధాశక్తి సహాయము; and, adverting to the circumstances in the country ever since Mahatmaji's 'Call to Arms', i.e. to dare or die, he proceeded to examine the personnel of the Congress Executive in Andhra, which was, frankly, limited in self-reliance; and to illustrate his position, he instanced the case of the President of the Committee, who was still "progressing" in faith and complete self-surrender, and he suggested that the House might relieve him of the job, and elect one with lesser pretensions but more faithful and dedicated. He reminded the House that, without a dedicated and determined comradery on their side, it was worse than useless to try to meet the mighty adversary in the country; and he added that, in case his proposition

was rejected, he would take it that the House was still for the continuance of a plutocratic leadership in Andhra; that the time for the coming of a poor man, like himself, into the movement was not yet; and in that view, he would, in all humility, venture to seek a more appropriate vocation for himself outside the Congress, so that he could thereby serve at least himself, if not the country. But, if the House was for a policy of a fuller faith in the cause he, for one, wouldn't certainly mind damming himself once again, and go the whole-hog for it.

It is thus clear that Gopalakrishna stood in the meeting for a purification of our Congress life; but, strangely, he was out-voted by a two-thirds majority whereupon he announced his resignation from the Andhra Congress organisation and to save himself from a hypocritical position, he walked out of the meeting and retired to his house. Gopalakrishna's resignation created a great stir in the House; some were sorry; others were perplexed; and there were also those who were really pleased that they had, after all, got rid of a very inconvenient person from their circles. And, as their mouth-piece, one member at once rose to his feet and moved a proposition that "The House do immediately accept the resignation of Mr. Gopalakrishnayya!"

To be sure, this last performance dumb-founded a section of the House, who were not adapted to the Congress practices before; and who felt that both justice and the fair name of the House demanded that the rashness of the 'elders' should be defeated;

one of the members moved that the matter be adjourned till the next morning, and, in the meanwhile, a few intermediaries be sent to Gopalakrishna to wean him from his decision.

The catastrophe was thus averted for the day and, in a subdued atmosphere, the House proceeded with the rest of the business for the day. The next item was the election of the Secretariat and the Executive. At that time there were one General Secretary and two 'dummy Directors', i.e. two more Secretaries who held that position nominally. To ensure uniformity and proper efficiency of administration, it was proposed that there should be only one post for the year; and it was acceded to, without any opposition practically.

Two names were there-upon proposed for the Post of the Secretary, and both of them had excellent claims. One was Gopalakrishna who had been till lately General Secretary of the A.I.C.C., and the other was Mr. Sambamurty, who had been General Secretary of the Cocanada Congress Reception Committee and was an equally strenuous and self-effacing, though not perhaps such a brilliant, worker as Gopalakrishna. But Sambamurty declined the offer, inspite of great pressure from friends and patriots; and the field was thus clear for an unopposed return of Gopalakrishna as the Andhra Secretary.

But, when it became inevitable that Gopalakrishna would thus become the sole Secretary, the elders began to think, and they made the House revert to the triple Secretaryship idea! And it was

decided to have three Secretaries, instead of one! It was a question not of efficiency now, but of personal equationing. If Sambamurthy was there, one would suffice; but, with Gopalakrishna as inevitable, there should be two more to bag the game!

Here, again, Providence provided a test. For the choice of the three Secretaries three names were proposed, among which Gopalakrishna's was of course one. For a long time there were no other proposals; the President called for any more names; and rang the bell; but there were none. The time for nominations was over and the President stood up to announce the unopposed return of the three Secretaries. But just at that time Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya slyly hinted a few minutes adjournment; glided up to Sambamurthy to request him to stand; but when he was adamant, Mr. Kaleswararao (who had been thrice approached previously, but thrice refused) was set up; and thus for three Secretarial seats, there were four names. Elimination of Gopalakrishna, however, was out of the question; and he still came in as one, though he himself was absent from the house and he had no part or lot in the election proceedings. And the cleverness of the leaders merely ousted a poor Non-Brahmin, who should otherwise have been there!

The leaders thus did their heroic best to keep out Gopalakrishna altogether from the Committee; but when that was not found possible, as a last resort, they tried the strength of their physical numbers, and pitched upon Mr. Kaleswararao as their nominee

for the Chief Secretaryship. The House by that time had become half-tired and half-deceived; and Mr. Kaleswararao was elected to the chief Secretary's place.

The news of his election was quickly communicated to Gopalakrishna; and Sjt. Sambamurthy and one or two others went to him to induce him to accept the newly proffered Secretaryship. Gopalakrishna was not unwilling to hearken to reasonable persuasion; and had no objection to reconsider, if his services were really required by the Congress. He however, opined that the proffered Secretaryship, i.e. as a second to Sjt. Kaleswara Rao, seemed to be rather a dummy affair; and, if it was proposed to be given him as a "sinecure" for his past services, then he would rather have none of the kind, because he could, if need be, "wipe off his own tears", and a consolation-prize to him was unnecessary. On the other hand, if he was assured that his services were really needed, then he was quite prepared to come back; and, as a test, he instanced that, if the administration of certain departments, like National Education, Ramadandu (Volunteers) and National Service (Desaradhaka Brundamu) was entrusted to him, he would cheerfully take up the responsibility. The intermediaries felt satisfied with that position; took a letter of qualified withdrawal, couched in the above spirit and terms; and returned to the meeting.

Gopalakrishna's letter was conceived in a spirit and couched in a language which was far beyond the comprehension of the mediocre house which had assembled to decide upon his destinies; and it

was, therefore, easily misunderstood by some and misinterpreted by others, a section of whom again proposed that Gopalakrishna's resignation be accepted forth-with, adding to it now a clause that his letter was an 'insult' to the House, which wouldn't brook any dictation from outside!

A suggestion was made at that stage that Gopalakrishna may be sent for to explain his letter and his conduct of the previous day. The proposal at once received a general consent from the few impartial, who were shocked at the conduct of the 'big guns', and who were quite anxious that an honourable compromise should be arrived at. The proposal, however, raised a flutter in the dove-cotes of the elders; and even the biggest of them began sulking but they dared not openly lead an opposition and silently mumbled away their helplessness.

Gopalakrishna was thus sent for; he came; and gave a full—some explanation of the contents of his letter. Adverting to the alleged 'insult' to the House, he expounded his views on "*our* Parliamentary privileges", saying that, according to the Indian tradition, the 'Sabha' was a manifestation of Divinity (సభ నారాయణ స్వరూపము) Later on, he alluded to the theme and quoting the Mantra-Pushpa version of " సహస్ర శీర్షః పురుషః " he said "where there are a thousand heads, i.e. many, there is God"). Therefore, he dared not 'insult' anybody, much less God; and he also explained that, according to our tradition, one is at liberty to address a Sabha in the language of Kavi Choudappa, with ten moral and ten

obscene sayings, if need be ( పది నీతులు పది బాతులు పది శృంగారములతోడ. ) and even if something strange or out-of-the-way in his language or conduct was to be noticed it was in accordance with our traditional "Privileges" of a Sabha and no "insult" was ever meant to anybody and least of all to the House. But if anybody should still feel unconvinced, he would apologise to the House, for the Sabha was a manifestation of God;—and, so saying, he prostrated himself before the Sabha!

The scene was a soul-stirring one; and it moved almost everybody who was present, barring doubtless the determined clique. The House, however, agreed to accept the terms of Gopalakrishna's service; and entrusted to him the work of the departments mentioned in his letter. It was a nominal victory for Gopalakrishna, as we shall presently see; but it was there for what it was worth. It was not quite just to him, for all the disservice done by the leaders in ousting him from the A.I.C.C. and the A.P.C.C. General Secretaryships; but was acquiesced in as the best under the circumstances. The elders themselves were still reluctant and grumbling, but had to give way for the time being, hoping, however, for ringing up a majority for themselves at some future time, if not immediately; and thus getting reconciled for the day, they bided their time.

The one outstanding feature of the meeting was the revelation of the extent of persecution which Gopalakrishna was subjected to by the elite of the Andhra Congress. And if further proof is necessary,



it may be cited here that, though Gopalakrishna originally belonged to the Guntur district, he was not even elected to the Provincial Congress Committee from that district, and perhaps that was intended to "cut the guardian knot"! The ostensible plea was, of course that Gopalakrishna had not paid his four-anna subscription in time for the P.C.C. elections! But that was perhaps no reason why great destinies should be summarily dismissed; and, if it was so very necessary, anybody could have paid it for that matter, or Gopalakrishna himself would have paid it if it was brought to his notice. When he was thus ousted even from the A.P.C.C. membership, it was through the indulgence of a kind friend from Bezawada, that Gopalakrishna could come up even to the Provincial Congress Committee. But an open rupture between him and the Congress organisation was somehow averted in the July 1924 meeting; and it will be interesting to notice how he fared in his new role of the 'Second Secretary' of the A.P.C.C.

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## CHAPTER XXIII

## Some A. P. C. C. Affairs.

Technically, Gopalakrishna's career as the 'Second Secretary' of the A.P.C.C. lasted for a little over eleven months, *i.e.*, from July 1924 to June 1925; but such were the conditions obtaining in the Committee at that time, that he was more or less pensioned off, as soon as he took charge of the position and nominally dismissed in June 1925.

In this connection, an article entitled "The National Work in Andhra—A Retrospect" in the 'Sadhana' dated 11—1—1925 may be recalled, as it deals mainly with the conditions of Congress life which he had to face, and the main lines of reform which he ineffectually tried to introduce thereinto. By that time, of course, the cup of his humiliation was full; and the occasion of the Belgaum Congress over which Mahatmajī had presided, was sought to be availed of by Gopalakrishna for a searching of hearts for making a renewed effort at the re-starting of the Nation. In view of its importance, we reproduce here the main contents of the article, before going into the details of his A.P.C.C. career.

**"The Andhra Provincial Congress Committee meets on the 17th to take stock of the situation and lay out plans for the future. It is an important occasion for every Andhra nationalistic worker. He will do well to think and think before he will take another leap in the dark.**

“May we help him to some knowledge of the situation?”

“His Provincial Congress Committee as also his District and Taluk Committees have been destitute not only of genuine and sufficient membership, not only of proper representation, nor funds or of any degree of acceptance or approbation of the Andhra public mind, but are so crammed with cliques and clans which are perpetually at sixes and sevens with each other, that the continuance with any degree of decency of national service under the auspices of Congress organisations in Andhra Desa, has become well nigh impossible. The history of their recent past makes a very sorry reading, indeed. Such a horrible hollowness betrayed itself throughout, that the most inveterate optimist can be staggered to the extent of excusing himself of even so much as a consideration of their condition..... The utter failure of Gandhi Puja Nidhi:.....the miserable collapse of many a newly started national institution;.....the total disappearance of temperance work and weal; the present panic for khadi and spinning, despite khaddar banks, co-operative societies and lakhs of khadi Board money; we-don't-know-what-to-say species of confession at a recent meeting of Andhra Provincial Congress Committee of its President himself of his continued unbelief and non-participation in the principle and programme respectively of untouchability as also the clever shelving of it by the passionate khadi-love of Andhra Congress Aristocrat, and also the **cruel unconcern of the Andhra Public; the gruesome**

poverty of the Congress Circles themselves of unity, not to speak of the normal non-existence of it amidst our general public life;—are some of the more obvious of the symptoms.

“In their ranks, there has been no end to inequity, intolerance, pettiness. Mutual jealousies and recriminations are a normal feature. Comradeship has not yet attained to the level of even an aspiration. While a camouflaged commercialism governs khadi work, a gratuitous snobbery rules the committee’s job. Very pious frauds both are which, whenever assailed, look to an invertebrate innocence for rescue. Two full years and the name and good-will of Andhra public life of the period were mercilessly marauded. Every type of *have*, but what works its wares out of it, and every type of *have not* save the unwanted, have been hounded out. The pious spinner and the Satan-forsaken sinner remain to bring up stragglers.

“All of us are accomplices. Nobody in particular, is ‘docked’. Let us not be ashamed to own truth.....To be very charitable, let us put it that we have all been mere soldiers. We know next to nothing of ‘strategy’. Somebody else guided, somebody else decided, somebody else drove us on and we marched on—and perhaps won for a while in the first campaign. When the second was to be commenced, *that* somebody was not in his place and we flourished all our amateur talent. But this was the reward. Bitter though it be, let us swallow it bravely and begone,—to our due and proper station.

In future work, let us cordially make way for those who dare.....The hour is for all to come in and for the chronic to make way.

“Should we not make a supreme effort to bring in all, to make these institutions as broad-bottomed as possible? Should we hesitate to withdraw, if need arises? Let us choose, and for God’s sake, save ourselves from future calumny.”

The article had the courtesy of a censure from the President of the Provincial Congress Committee, who wrote: “Both the matter and the language of the article are highly objectionable and it is most regrettable and disappointing that you, a responsible officer of the P.C.C. should have thought fit to make such irresponsible statements. In writing and publishing the article, you have done great injustice to the very cause of the Congress in Andhradesha.” The President, therefore, “would strongly advise you (Gopalakrishna) both in your interest as well as in the interest of the cause which must be sacred both to you and to me, to withdraw the allegations contained in the article, or in case you cannot withdraw them, to clearly explain your position.”

This call for “explanation” necessitated a reply from Gopalakrishna, which sums up his position as a “responsible officer of the P.C.C.” and from which the following extracts are quoted. In his reply Gopalakrishna said:

“I did, indeed, ‘protest against the state of affairs in the meetings of the committee itself,’ times without number.....But till now I had not the fortune of having a dog’s chance of hearing even from you. At times when I pressed for division, my suggestions were all snapped by tutored majorities or defeated by diplomatic compromises.....For my being a ‘responsible officer’, you certainly know how far I was allowed the ‘responsibility’ and how, since I had been appointed almost every meeting of the P.C.C. brandished a resolution of dismissal. It was a story by itself how I was dragged as one of the secretaries. How I refused and what all I stipulated, how diplomatically it was adjusted, and how cleverly it was all defeated. For all these also I can quote chapter and verse, if you care to peruse them once again. You are and can afford to be a bit human. Can’t you see and acknowledge that my ‘responsibility’ as an ‘officer of P.C.C.’ is a terminological inexactitude? I was supposed to be doing Desaradhakas’ work, but no district was to deal with me, nor any attempt of mine to execute the resolution therefor should have any effect. I was supposed to be doing National Educational Work, and no proposal to further that could even get so much as a consideration at the hands of the committee, not to speak of its many other vicissitudes. You know the fate of the Local Boards and Municipalities circular Resolution. I am supposed to be doing the Volunteers, and you know my Ramadandu’s troublous course of fate. The way these ‘responsibilities’ fared you certainly do know, and I only refrain from narrating the ugly detail lest

you should charge me with any inelegance. Responsibility *De Facto* there is none. I have been treated as a most inconvenient, and to use the famous appellation of 'Janmabhumi', 'disgruntled and turbulent Have-Not', to be necked out at the earliest opportunity from the Committee." And, after dealing with the various matters raised in his article and the President's letter, he concluded: "Whatever I stated in the article, it all proceeded from the sense of 'responsibility', coupled with a severe introspection necessitated by the new era of public life inaugurated by Mahatmaji. Being as I am, one interested in the cause which 'must be sacred both to you and to me', the agony that is there gave expression to that and allowed itself to be tempered by that sense of 'responsibility'..... Largeness of heart and vision are necessary to evaluate these, and I am sure you can never lack them. But if you feel you and your committee are injured by it, I can be human and apologise. But if you will oblige, I shall withdraw, not that, but my Secretaryship of the committee".

These extracts sum up so admirably the entire position and career of Gopalakrishna in the A.P.C.C., that we find it difficult to add, in any way, to their fine sentiment or finer expression. Still, for the benefit of the lay reader, who may not be, at this distance of time, acquainted with the "chapter and verse" of the main incidents, we feel compelled to mention a few details.

In the Working Committee meeting (of the A.P.C.C.) held on 7—7—1924, it may be remember-

ed, Gopalakrishna was entrusted with three departments of Congress work, *viz.*, National Workers; (2) National Education; and (3) Volunteers, including the Ramadandu. And it will be profitable to examine his achievement in these various departments, in the first instance, or rather, as to how far his aspirations were sought to be frustrated by the rest of the Committee in respect of these items.

In regard to National Service, the Secretary could not appoint any of the 'workers', nor fix their salaries or regulate their allowances; nor even take any steps to effectively control their movements or their work. All their reports of work had to be submitted to the other 'Working Secretary', who, if it pleased him, could forward it to his colleague. Gopalakrishna could not regulate or interfere with the pay-bills or the travelling allowances of these workers; and one instance, at least, was known wherein the salaries were enhanced without any reference either to the Secretary-in-charge or even the Committee itself. Finance was in charge of the Working Secretary; and, as funds dwindled down, the ranks of the workers had gradually thinned and the department itself soon became *non-functio*.

Secondly, as regards National Education. At the time we were speaking of there were a number of these lower and higher national schools, and Gopalakrishna felt that they could have absolutely no future worth the name, if some system had not been devised; and he accordingly propounded a scheme whereby the Local Boards in Andhra might "im-



mediately undertake the financing of the existing National schools unconditionally, leaving all questions of curricula, superintendence, discipline etc., in the hands of the local Congress organisations until such time as may be deemed necessary for safeguarding the strictly national character of these institutions." In an explanatory Note, he added: "The point is that, as every type of educational activity must be welcome to all, the prevention from closing down, for want of funds, of the existing national schools is the first consideration before an agreement on other questions is reached." In the same scheme, he further elaborated his idea thus: "There are as many as a hundred national schools in the Andhra Province and it is time that we consolidate the activities of these institutions and secure for them a common aim and governance..... It is indeed a University we have to organise with these schools affiliated in the first instance and with some of the most important of them, such as the Andhra Jateeya Kalasala of Masulipatam and Sree Gandhi Maha Vidyalayam of Ellore as its fully equipped University Colleges. This would incidentally render unnecessary any Government effort in the matter of education and the abiding Congress view in this behalf will have been adequately realised. This can be accomplished only by a powerful participation of all the existing Boards and Municipalities in the Andhradesha."

This interesting scheme had a tale to tell of itself; and as the instance was typical, we shall narrate its fate in some detail. •

As soon as the P.C.C. meeting was finished on 7—7—24, Gopalakrishna and Sjt. G. Harisarvothama Rao, discussed together a comprehensive scheme for the capture and working of the Local Boards and Municipalities in the Andhradesa; a rough draft was prepared and signed by both the Secretaries, and it was arranged that, after the final touches were given, it should be sent to Mr. Kaleswara Rao, the 'Working Secretary' and the President so that the scheme might go out with the full authority and sanction of the Provincial Congress Executive. The scheme itself was finally ready by about July-end; and Gopalakrishna had even a casual talk about it with his Bezwada colleague, the Working Secretary of the Committee. But while this scheme was being got ready, the Working Secretary hurriedly drew up a scheme himself, without the knowledge either of Gopalakrishna or of Sjt. Harisarvothama Rao; got it printed over-night; and, in spite of requests to postpone its issue, he despatched it post-haste—evidently not to miss the first Prize from the public!

On its merits, the scheme of the Working Secretary was a common-place plea for the capture of the Local Boards, and for their encouraging the Congress Constructive Programme of Khaddar, Untouchability, Hindi and National Education etc., Its originator, frankly, had neither the vision nor even the grit for adumbrating a really original scheme or for enforcing it into dynamic and effective action. And its sole achievement, possibly, was just to prevent a scheme which was as brilliant in

expression as it was deeply conceived and clearly laid down in all its details.

In order to understand the significance of the scheme of Gopalakrishna it is necessary to notice at least a few aspects relative thereto. For realising, what he called, "the imminent coalescence of all national effort", he envisaged that a supreme effort was necessary the first stage of which, so far as the locally 'self-governing' bodies were concerned, he declared, was:

"i. A clear and firm declaration on the part of the existing Boards that the funds at their disposal is National Property.....

"ii. In cases of defection, the electors shall bring into existence another Council or Board consisting of members freshly elected and pledged to carry on unflinchingly their wishes. And if the defecting Council refuses to yield, the electors must be induced to refuse the taxes to the said defecting Board and must be educated to transfer their allegiance to that of their own choice, to whom they shall entrust the carrying on of all business. This would entail the reopening of the question of mass civil disobedience and the nation can thus be rejuvenated on to the great sacrifice it has reserved for its Swaraj."

The implications of the plan can be clearly grasped by the following further references thereto:

“(6) That a vigorous propaganda be immediately started amongst the electors and the elected to enable them to understand and realise the imperative necessity of working the constructive programme by means of the various Boards and Municipalities, even in defiance of overt or covert Governmental interference thereto; and in case such obstruction actually obtains, the electors shall forthwith repudiate all connection with the Government and elect a fresh Board or Municipal Council as the case may be, which shall function as the duly constituted one, and shall be responsible to no other but the electors’ authority. In this contingency, the electors and tax-payers generally shall be vigorously canvassed to transfer allegiance to these newly constituted bodies with the resulting obligation of paying rents, taxes or cesses as well to them”.

“In conclusion, we wish to submit that it is time that we direct our attention towards a speedy nationalisation, thorough and complete, of all the Boards and Municipalities in the Andhradesha. ‘Self-governing’ institutions must be made to mean what they profess to be. It is a not unwarranted comment that if we had concentrated national attention during the great campaigning of 1921 upon annexing all Local Bodies to the Congress, the fall of the main fortresses of the bureaucracy would have been rendered easy. The attack which was directed against these was vanquished or was at least successfully withstood, chiefly through the instrumentality of these quasi-official and quasi-

non-official bodies which constituted themselves as the outer defences of the bureaucratic citadel. The Congress, indeed, scored against the main force but was overpowered unseen from behind by the organised strength of these, diffused unnoticed throughout every capillary of the national life.....The Congress organizations in the Andhradesh ought to be ready with all their resources at their command to place themselves at the disposal of the Boards for realising the immediate coalescence of all national effort. The fight with the bureaucracy in this respect, though it is the brown variety that we have to engage, would be more subtle if at least equally arduous. And we have to prepare for a situation not unlike that during the year 1921, with all its scenes and Satyagrahams."

We believe enough has been said already to convince the reader that what Gopalakrishna was aiming at in his scheme was the thin end of the wedge of a really revolutionary principle and policy whose effects it is hardly possible to exaggerate for a country-wide National movement.

Fancy! A Nation-wide campaign of Chirala-Peralas all over India! Declaring allegiance to Swaraj! And, what is more, in every town, taluk and district actually organising parallel Boards! And yet, this was the real import of a Gopalakrishna Scheme of capturing Local Boards; and how different it was from the Hindi-Spinning-Voting Addresses or passing condemnatory Resolutions—Scheme of the Working Secretary! And yet the



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latter had effectively prevented even the consideration of a scheme fraught with such far-reaching results!

Similar was the story of the "troubled fate" of Ramadandu. We have alluded to it more than once in the previous pages. For a long time it was not even recognised as a "peaceful and legitimate" organisation. At last, it was "admitted" as one of the forms of "volunteers" working under the Congress. In 1924, Gopalakrishna carried on a vigorous propaganda in the cause of Ramadandu at Alamur, Madugula, Kovvur etc., and even the Andhra Provincial Conference which met at Madras in October 1924, passed a resolution favouring the Ramadandu. Therefore, one would expect a glorious prospect for the Ramadandu, when Gopalakrishna became the Secretary in charge of Volunteers!

But "Volunteers" was in his portfolio; Finance was somebody else's. At first, he got an apologetic grant of a Hundred or two; but there were four other members of the Volunteer Board to bind his discretion, and actually the departmental clerk was disbanded after the second month! Gopalakrishna proposed the printing of a Ramadandu scheme in Telugu and English; but the Board wouldn't move after the Telugu version was finished! Likewise, he hoped to send a contingent of 1,116 of the Ramadandu volunteers to Belgaum, where Mahatmaji was presiding over the Congress sessions in December; but, as the Secretary-in-charge, he could not



have any discretion in the matter of consulting the Reception Committee authorities. Again, he proposed to make Ramnagar the headquarters of both the Provincial Congress and the Ramadandu, and he even offered a plot of land for the purpose; but the proposition could not even be "talked out" on the floor of the House!

The above was apart from so many other things of almost daily occurrence; and there was trouble over every trifling matter where he was concerned. Every T.A. Bill of the Secretary or of his Assistant was made the topic of a big controversy; the honorarium attached to his Assistant was abolished within a few months,—though the Working Secretary's Assistant was to continue; and even the Clerk was given the go-bye in December or January. The Chief, of course, continued nominally for some time longer, and, after a sleepy existence for some more months, in May 1925, the records were taken away from him; and next month, he was formally ousted from his legal position—nay, he was not even elected to the Executive Committee for the new year!

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## CHAPTER XXIV.

## Rearrival at Ramnagar.

Gopalakrishna, it may be remembered, went to Bezwada early in 1923 for the purpose of starting one or two daily papers; and latterly he was stuck up at the place firstly owing to the A.I.C.C. work and latterly owing to the A.P.C.C's. But now both of them had practically proved "miserable failures"; and, in the meanwhile, his health also began to fail, so much so, a sort of "chronic malaria" began troubling him incessantly; and all these made him think once more of going back to Ramnagar. And it was how it happened.

On the 28th October 1924, Gopalakrishna returned from Madras; and on 2—11—24 he wrote to a friend: "I am now (9. 30 A.M.) leaving for Guntur, and after putting things in order there, shall pack up and everything thither.....Only to-day I am able to shift about, and I must first go to Ramnagar".

Again on 9—11—24: "As usual, contrary to the announced programme, I jumped in here (Ramnagar) bag and baggage, on the very day on which you would suppose me going to Guntur. I haven't been to Guntur yet! And don't know either when I would be going thither! There is now nothing left of me at Bezwada, except a few forlorn hopes which, by the way seem to be pretty chronic in their persistence".

One of his letters of a slightly later date contains a description of his mind about this time. It speaks of his condition in March and April 1925; but it was equally true of his transitional career when he left Bezwada for Ramnagar. And he writes in his letter dated 13—4—25: “I have not started the medicine yet as I have to make up the wherewithal for it. There is yet absolutely no improvement in health, and it is probably getting worse, but I shan’t prophesy anything. I remain yet the same old irascible invalid, whose premature senility ever cries out for a juvenile philosophy—playful, ardent and yet supremely wise,—and both indulge in cursing the fates and nursing my bad temper. I am growing terribly pessimistic,—in the philosophic sense of the term; inclined to be very self-centred, growing introspective perhaps. One thing seems to stand out pretty plainly. There is transition in my character and content. I feel it. More daring or desperation, more of decision or downrightness, more contentment or compromise; I can’t definitely say what it is I am getting into. But the feel of either is on. Shall we hope for the best?”

There was an occurrence about this time which shows that his health had completely broken down even by the middle of 1924. He had been getting bad attacks of malaria for one or two years previously; and while he was still in Bezwada, about July and August 1924, he was getting it more or less persistently, on every alternate day. One evening he had no fever, and as it was pleasant, he

desired to go on a short walk. A friend accompanied him for chit-chat; and hardly had they walked a furlong, when he fell down and swooned! After some effort, he came back to senses, sat awhile and renewed the walk. But a little more distance, and he was down again. Neither he nor his friends realised that he had really become so weak as that; for outwardly he was pulling on bravely, despite poverty persecution, or even disease, which were all as nothing before his high spirits. For at least a year or more, in his all-India tours or his Bezwada career the motor car or the jutka was always ready at hand; and he did not attempt to walk any considerable distance at all during this period! True, it meant both a cost and a cover for his disease; but he indulged in it freely; and, in the end, he himself was surprised at the prostration which came upon him.

In October, despite ill-health, he had to undertake a trip to Madras in connection with the Andhra Conferences, which was of varied interest. The Conferences themselves were quite a tame affair, except for the interludes of mirth and merriment introduced by Gopalakrishna in his speeches now and then. But there were two matters of interest to a reader of Gopalakrishna's story— and both of them were extra-conferential. One was relative to his health, and the other about an interesting, albeit pathetic, letter which he wrote to Mr. (now Sir) Allady Krishnaswamy Ayya, who is well-known for his charities. Gopalakrishna was in need of money; and he desired to avail himself of his visit

to Madras for seeing a few friends, among whom Mr. Allady was one. An engagement was fixed up, but Gopalakrishna was a bit indisposed, and he therefore wrote a letter and sent it through a friend. The letter was kindly returned by Mr. Krishnaswamy Ayya, together with his contribution; and if Gopalakrishna was thankful to Mr. Ayya for the latter, we are certain, posterity will be grateful for the gift of the letter itself, which is largely auto-biographical and which reads thus:

“I feel I can take advantage of my presence in Madras and renew my application for help. I am quite in the street, and need very urgent succour. It is just a human proposition and based on no other fact or fancy. Once upon a time, you remember, I had approached you in the roll of a canvasser of a limited company and that has now blown off, as none would patronise that. That was just an attempt in the modern style to beg, and I little knew, that, to be successful in that, the beggar needs to be rich, and never poor. I now, therefore, try the style I inherited, the ancient style. And I won't beg of many, and this is also of the ancient form. Modernity to this extent, of course, I choose to adopt, viz., I won't be a perpetual beggar. The reason why I found myself in this style is very simple. I felt I was called upon to die when I had first joined the Non-cooperation, but now I learn I have to live. This is a terrible prospect,—especially for a dreamer, and particularly in these days. Dreamers were perpetual beggars in ancient times and the Na-

tion had acknowledged responsibility for their weal. Now-a-days a beggar himself is a problem and perpetual beggary, a species of insanity.

“I have been originally of very modest means, of which my education argued for a three-fourths, and the rest is answered by my ‘serving the country’. I took none from the Congress funds, being too suspicious and superstitious. It always used to haunt my mind that 99 per cent of Congress funds is tainted, whatever this word may mean. And even as the losing gambler who holds on to the play to the very last despite his terrific drift to bankruptcy, I stuck on, but the moment has come when gamblers, cranks and madmen must make way to wisdom and hurry back to their asylums or asrams or avasanams. I have one such thing at the above address (Ramana-gar, Chirala P.O.) I feel it can be kept going by getting some three thousand rupees all told. Anyway I fancy I can keep floating my own life with that capital, denying myself many hobbies, including the one of public or national service. I thought of approaching just a few gentlemen, who understand, in order to make this up. Success or failure, I shall try to be sane. I don’t worry further. I would prefer a refusal from these, to help from an interested patron. Some of the big guns of Andhra National Service have been insanely jealous of me, and helped me to the present plight by interfering with every attempt of mine to live,—of course a life perfectly independent of their patronage. I don’t curse them as this helped me to reduce all my ambitions to their very legitimate proportions.

“I have now to look out and you are one to look to. If you care to help me, kindly do it at once, as, I repeat, I am quite in the street. Don't expect in return anything but a blessing. Bolshevistik beggary can promise no dividends. I only ask leave to live. I feel you can bear with my intrusion.”

This letter fully describes the transition in the life and career of Gopalakrishna just on the eve of his jumping out of his Bezwada ‘Asram’; and in its autobiographical, as well as literary value perhaps it is unrivalled throughout the range of his rich and philosophic store-house of letters.

There was also another incident, relative to his health, which reveals the desperation to which he had been reduced at this time. His health, we have already seen, was getting from bad to worse; and off and on he was having a little low fever coupled with some cough. Doctors diagnosed it as ‘chronic malaria’ and treatment was prescribed accordingly. But a ‘lay’ friend who was with him had a half-suspicion that it might be Tuberculosis. He didn't desire to divulge his suspicions to Gopalakrishna directly; but he took the good “Burra Saheb” (Mr. Burra Satyanarayana of Madras) into confidence, who kindly arranged through Col. Ganpat Rai for an X-Ray Examination in the General Hospital. It was desired that Gopalakrishna should stay for a day or two previously in the Royapettah Hospital, for purpose of medical observation, and Col. Rai arranged a seat in the ‘European ward’, to which Gopalakrishna was admitted on the 27th October,

at about 3.30 p.m. His friends left him at the hospital and came to Mr. Burra's which was barely a furlong off; and within five minutes more, Gopalakrishna himself was back to tell everybody "he would rather go to jail than to hospital!" When he was in Britain, he was in a Scotch hospital for some months; but even the First class ward in a premier hospital in his own country now appeared to him but the replica of a hell-block. He wouldn't listen to any argument; and, by the evening mail, he packed off to Bezwada!

The incident is important, not only because it shows the state of Gopalakrishna's mind and the ways of his conduct; but it prevented the only chance for an early diagnosis of the fell disease which was ultimately declared as such by doctors only twenty months later! The friend who was with Gopalakrishna, indeed tried a number of times to get some expert opinion about his case; but every time either God or Gopalakrishna prevented a decision. The 'big Bhoy' Dr. Mallaparazu, was begged to go and examine his illustrious 'friend'; but his Taluk Congress work was evidently more pressing and important! Doctor Gurumurthy of Rajahmundry, after many trials on his own part came to Ramnagar, took two drops of blood on two glass slides for microscopic examination; but a thief stole away the purse containing these slides as well as the Doctor's tickets and money! Two more slides were sent subsequently by post; but they were broken in transit. Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya who was consulted confidentially by the same friend examined Gopalakrishna



and declared him about November 1924 as not tubercular; said it was a case of asthma; and probably recommended tobacco as a remedy. Later on, i.e. after Gopalakrishna died, the talented Editor of the 'Janmabhumi', in an obituary note, wrote a homily on "laymen and quack doctors" who diagnosed Gopalakrishna's ailment in its earlier stages as asthma, but it was really consumption! And, if we remember rightly, Dr. Pattabhi was the only person who diagnosed it as asthma, pure and simple, though several gave it out as chronic or incipient malaria!

There were other attempts at getting at a correct diagnosis of Gopalakrishna's disease by "quack-doctors"; as well as by degree-holders; and one brilliant young friend, in particular, of the latter cadre, repeatedly examined the blood and phlegm of Gopalakrishna and every time declared that it was full of malarial germs! And it was not actually till June 1926 when Major Shastry came and examined him and finally declared it was a case of advanced Tubercle!

Such, briefly, was the position of Gopalakrishna when he arrived at Ramnagar in November 1924.

Ramnagar! what a congeries of associations it raises in one's mind! What mixed feelings of pleasure and of pain, of glory and of grief, of hope and of disappointment! For it was the place of Gopalakrishna's aspiration, and at the same time, it became the cremation-ground of all his hopes—and actually the burning ghat even of his physical frame! From

one stand-point it had the most expansive landscape of the sun, moon, air and water; yet it is also a mere and sheer desert. Here he conducted his glorious Chirala campaign; yet it all ended in miserable failure and today a 'Swarajist Chairman' presides over the very same Municipality which he wanted to destroy! Here he attempted once, twice and thrice, to build those temples and that Goshti which were the dream of his life; and here it was that they receded the more, the more he desired to see them realised. Here he longed to create that Kingdom of God, to bring up, as he put it once, that 'Paradise upon Earth' which has been the aspiration of a Buddha and Christ, of a Mohamad and of Sree Aurabindo; but even the Gods who were to preside over the work, in spite of every endeavour, chose to sink into the Earth's bowels and remain ever in the *Nirguna* state! Here it was that he came repeatedly as to a Hydro, to regain his lost health; but every time he came, he became worse and worse, and in order to escape from a veritable 'Hell on Earth', he had to make out an exit in spite of his solemn resolves to "fix himself up in Ramnagar", till at last he settled down in Guntur and died! Lastly, here it was that his earthy bones and ashes had been mated with their kindred dust; but at the same time, it was here that his glorious Spirit, like the famous Phoenix, has had a Resurrection and his Birth-day—*Jayanthi*—has been regularly celebrated these six years since his death! A bundle of strange contrasts! Yet that was Ramnagar! And it is Life! For "Ramnagar is just a place to live",—in other words, to live in an undying, immortal sense. And no wonder, that that great man of Madras, Sriman S. Sreeni-

vasa Iyengar who presided over the first year's function, fittingly declared:

“This place (Ramnagar) is sacred. The youth of Andhra must remember it. And the youth of other countries also!”

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## CHAPTER XXV.

## The "Few Forlorn Hopes at Bezwada".

Gopalakrishna arrived in Ramnagar early in November 1924, just after three years of interregnum, one of which was spent in jail, and the other two in sowing wild Congress oats in the country. After his arrival there, he settled the preliminaries of things at home, commenced a regular course of treatment, and for a time it appeared as though he was recuperating ! Then there were the personal affairs of selling some lands and repaying old debts which fully engaged his time and attention ; and about the middle of November he even went to Bombay to attend the Unity Conference, where he joined the Swarajya Party. Next month, with the help of a small subsidy from the Party Exchequer, he revived his hopes of starting the 'Sadhana' and the 'Ramadandu', an English and a Telugu weekly and Tri-weekly respectively ; and in pursuit of these "forlorn hopes", he spent another period of experimentation which ended in a further disillusioning of his already disillusioned mind, about the futility of our egotistical endeavours, and eventually he emerged out of it a most chastened spirit though, it is sad to reflect that Indian journalism is so much the poorer for the failure of his efforts. And here is a brief story of these journalistic ventures of Gopalakrishna.

It may be remembered that Gopalakrishna desired to bring out two papers, entitled the 'Sadhana', one in English and one in Telugu, as early as 1919

at Chirala, and he actually obtained permission from the authorities for the publication of those journals. But the political storms which had burst in the country soon after drowned those journals which were lost for a good length of time; and when they were tried to be salvaged five years later, the Telugu journal was found altogether lost while the English 'Sadhana' had only a four-weeks' career, when it was finally ship-wrecked.

The first issue of the English weekly came out after much struggle on the 26th December 1924; and 'Sadhana' "a Journal of National Idealism" introduced itself thus: "We make.....no apology for launching out on the ocean of Thought our little bark—the 'Sadhana'. We are not unaware of the existence of many a strong sea-worthy vessel, operating on the High Seas, or gliding on the chartered track. We shall certainly profit by their fortunes. But let us be pardoned, we shall sail on in our own right. We bow to the adept, we admire the expert, we comrade the alert, and we help the inert. If we are superfluous, the fault is of the Maker. If we are freshers, we deserve well of the public. And we shall sail on undaunted by the cruel uncertainties of a prospect and unflattered by the generous indulgence of a fortune. Whenever we are in sight, we crave the indulgence of fellow-sailors, but ever demand the homage of the waves. We shall have humility enough to know the ocean is shoreless, unfathomable, unsafe. We shall have the courage to realise we have to sail, nevertheless. We shall be proud to receive admonition, humble to accept direc-

tion, but impudent to utter the Truth—as, of course, it shows itself to us. Intolerant of the puritanic, and human towards the sinful, we shall conceal none of our infirmities, howsoever offensive to current taste. We shall test it by its capacity for accommodation, by its concern for conviction, by its yearning for life,—Life, exalted and debased, noble and mean, blessed and cursed, albeit life. We shall revere the past, fondle the future, but pursue the present, the present that is the concrete of Time. We pose no proselytisers, we pursue no policies, and protest no poverty. We shall never be clever but ever be forgivers. We admit hate, if life-furthering, and shun love, if self-stultifying, but endeavour to adjust and aid both the creatures of Providence—even as the great Sankara did, one in the throat and one in the heart. Before Insolence Divine, we do bend; of the meanest of God's creatures we refuse not mercy. With the supreme conviction that we are but a tiny drop in the Ocean, we beg leave to negotiate a humble neighbourliness of our environment”.

In an article entitled ‘Our Ideal’, he quoted the “traditional, abiding and unalterable Hope of our race”, conveyed in the *Swasthi-Vakyam*, which, he described, as “our National Anthem”, “the refrain of all human endeavour in this part of the planet ever since man became conscious of the possibilities of his progress,” and translated it in these words:

“Peace be unto all people!

May the Lords of the Earth set their rule along  
righteous paths.

Plenty ever to Brahmin and Cow

(41)

Bliss to all worlds!"

Paraphrasing it still further, he wrote: "To secure general weal; to ensure righteous rule; to build and shield the Brahmana and the Cow; to invest all *Lokas*,—all states of existence or consciousness with an active sovereignty of Peace, is the quintessence of the typical Indian aspiration. It need hardly be said, *This is our Ideal.*"

Descending to realities, he proceeded to state: "But its translation into the realm of the practical and an enunciation of the resulting method and programme must be reserved to a future occasion. Suffice it here to say that we shall work, in our own humble way, for a synthesis of our cultural and social existence strictly in accordance with the moving spirit of the Time and the age-long traditions of our race. In the realm of politics, we have set before ourselves to work for the Swarajist programme". "But at the same time" he was careful to add: "our four years' experience, invaluable in itself, as relating to the social psychology of our people, showed that unless we centralise or, what is the same thing, synthesise or religionise all the varied activities of the National life, giving indeed the social and educational aspects the necessary emphasis, we shall not be able to advance to any decent stage in our onward progress. To achieve any tangible gain even in the political effort, we feel we must mobilise the activities of every conceivable type of reform, be it social, educational or cultural, so as to ensure strength and sufficiency to the Movement. ....The most immediate concern, next of course to our political work, is to reorganise and consolidate

Hindu society. The general Hindu-Muslim-Sikh-Parsee etc. Unity is indeed an almost primary concern of every one inclined to do his humble service to the country; but, we are sure, nothing tangible or substantial can be done in this direction unless and until the Hindu Society is cleansed off its awful anaemia and utter ungodliness. And the urgency of this task cannot be exaggerated". "Again, it bears repetition that Hindu society must first be attended to and those of us who are Hindus will do well to look out, to look back and look deep into our historic consciousness—our Karma—and fix their gaze on our traditional form of aspiration. The only way to accomplish this is to rescue and rejuvenate Hindu society and to reorganise it in accordance with the great Ideal (of *Advaita Thathwa*) handed down to us through ages".

How near these words to those of Sree Aurobinda Ghosh just at this time! For the great Yogi is reported to have told Lala Lajpati Rai: "On one question, he (Sree Aurobindo) seemed to be fairly positive, namely, the necessity of organising and strengthening the Hindu community. As far as I remember, his own words were these: 'You must organise and strengthen the Hindu community without creating an atmosphere of hostility towards the Muhammadan community because, after all, both the communities have to live in India'".

Adverting to the methods, Gopalakrishna, in the same article, referred to Sri Sankara's *Advaita Thathwa*, and, after pointing out that centuries have elapsed since the days of Sankaracharya and "the entire Hindu humanity has been enriched with such



infinite variety of human experience that the time now seems ripe for another great and perhaps final effort to be forthwith undertaken". This "great and perhaps final effort" has been more clearly defined as "a catastrophic overhaul of Indian Society"—"Verily we have the movement and the men to sound the gong and summon the faithful to a hearty social embrace".

The first issue also contained an article on the "Men of the Moment", i.e. Mahatma Gandhi, Pundit Motilal Nehru and Desabandhu Das, and a reprint of his abortive Local Boards' Scheme referred to in a previous chapter. The paper was published at Belgaum when the Congress had just ratified the Pact between the Swarajists and the No-changers, and the first issue placed in the hands of Gandhiji, whose blessings Gopalakrishna eagerly sought for and possibly is yet to receive.

The second issue came with just a week's holiday, after his return from Belgaum and it was mostly a Congress number; and in it, too, there was really too much, if not of 'conferencing', at least of conference-reviewing. But the attempt to elevate even our congressional life to the level of Idealism was there in every line and every word of the issue. Thus, take any page. And we will find the writer is discoursing more upon Ideals than upon a Congress or Conference Resolutions. "When an organisation is about to evolve into an organism, the surest sign is an unreserved and unerring submission to the loving direction or possession of a personality, a personality that is not a mere pronoun". "Even as the appearance of prime integers at every evolutionary juncture

of numerals, personalities appear for effecting the correct evolution." "Distrust of personalities is a chronic infirmity of every democracy". "Mahatma Gandhi is himself a 'Poem of Pity'." "Swaraj is the theme of a new Upanishad". "A gathering of 20 to 30,000 people is a divine Presence (సహస్రక్షీర్షః పురుషః)" "The illumined facade in the Congress pavilion is an aesthetic improvement." "The Swaraj Congress will, we venture to prophesy, beat the splendour of a thousand Wembleys."

The third issue contained an article on what may be called the "Name of our New Religion", whether it should be "Hindu, or Arya, or Brahmin-Which?" the discussion on which was continued in the next issue. The same number also began two series of articles on (1) National Education; and (2) the 'Confessions of a Convict';—the first of which was continued in the next issue, but the second was lost somewhere with the printers. The fourth number came a week late, owing evidently to the Editor's ill-health; but even so it was certainly "Better late than Never". A reprint of his views on "Our Social Problem" is to be found in the fourth issue, which, unfortunately proved to be the last. Gopalakrishna's illness increased; funds dwindled away; public support was lacking; and there was none else to take his place. And thus 'Sadhana' attained its 'Siddhi'. As Gopalakrishna himself would say, want of Sadhana killed the '*Sadhana*'.



## CHAPTER XXVI

## From the Human to the Divine Path

“**Ramadandu**” will appear when it has to. Meanwhile let us be secure in **Ramachandra**”.

—Gopalakrishna.

In the *Maha Bhagavatam*, there is an episode wherein the Elephant King, Gajendra, fought with his adversary, Makari or the Crocodile, in the waters for a long time,—evidently it was a naval battle—and when all his animal weapons were of no avail, he turned his mind finally towards God and surrendered himself to His mercy. And similar was the plight of Gopalakrishna after the failure of his journalistic ventures.

He described his position about this time in a letter to one Mr. Jagapati Varma, from which the following may be extracted. “Ever since my release from jail I have propagated the Gospel of a Universal Brahmanism in various places. But except to two or three intimate friends of mine the proposition was not even considered as worthy of attention by our people. To me, however, it became a passion of my soul and though I tried to suppress it in myself I found it irresistible and felt convinced that this is the most important of all our tasks before the country. I have endeavoured to withdraw myself completely from the political field; but after long waiting, when I had at last freed myself to attend to this most pressing, sacred work, alas! I am struck down

by Providence and rendered helpless by illness. And when every effort has thus failed, what struck my mind was that, being unable to meet my people and tell them about their primary *Dharma*, the only way of fulfilling my long-cherished Ideal and mission was by building those Temples of God who embodies the people, and to present my Brahmana Smriti to His hearing and to leave the world with an easy conscience." (Translated)

Such, generally-speaking, was the position after he gave up his papers and turned his mind towards God and the Temple-to Temple and Temple and nothing else but the Temple; but we must examine the transition in a slightly greater detail.

It may be remembered that throughout January, 1925 after he returned from Belgaum, he was busy with the 'Sadhana'; and, on 2nd February, after giving the articles for the fourth issue to the Press, he started on a pilgrimage to Antarvedi in the Godavary district where he was invited by the friends of the Rajole Congress Committee. His health was a bit trying at this time; but all the same he went, because it was 'Rama-karyam', i.e., God's work,—and he went with family. His hosts made the journey as smooth and comfortable as they could and they gave him good rest between station and station and avoided many demonstrations and public meetings which would otherwise have become inevitable; all the same, he had to deliver two or three discourses: three public speeches; and endless conversation throughout that week's journeying

in the district. But Gopalakrishna felt blessed, because he could pay his *Darshan* to the Lord Sri Narasimha, and perhaps he delivered to him his own humble mission, as he had done previously to Sree Ranganadha, and prayed for the destruction of all the "Empires of egoism which desecrate this God's beautiful earth." For Narasimha was the Terrible God of our Scriptures, and Gopalakrishna, it may be remembered, was at one time believing and hoping that Gandhiji himself would one day exhibit the qualities of *Raudra*, *Bhayanaka* and *Bhibhatsa*, in order to complete his "God-hood". And the great God seems to have responded, too, for immediately afterwards, Gopalakrishna gave up "all thoughts of Congress, Swarajya Party, everything," including his papers, and set himself to the building of two temples, which too eventually had to be abandoned.

From Antarvedi, he proceeded to Rajole, Amapuram, Cocanada and Rajahmundry on a Swaraj Party mission; and even during this visit he invited some friends to the Temples—installation ceremony at Ramanagar, whose date he would announce shortly. He returned home about the 12th February, and on 19th he wrote: "The foundation ceremony of the two temples (Siva and Vishnu, under the names respectively of Ramalingeswaraswamy and Sree Kodanda Ramachandramurty) has been fixed for the 5th of March (Phalguna Suddha Dasami) 9 a.m. I have not yet issued invitations as the printing is not yet done. I propose to invite just a few of our comrades and friends.

The universal invitationing may be reserved for the actual installation ceremony of the idols. Our Vootukury friends promised to bear the building portion of one of the temples. The rest, the Lord has got to fetch. Is there any that way, with whom the Lord hath influence?

“The donations may be in kind, and that is better. Specific things will thus avail as for instance, Dhawaja Pillars may be given by somebody; the constructional part of the Devi’s temples may be promised by some one else; another may undertake the Library portion, another the hall (Mandapam), a yet another the cost of the idols, etc. The following is a brief estimate of the whole thing:—

1.	Cost of idols, for seven; two main idols, two Devi idols, one small Anjaneya, one small Ganesa and one Nandi	Rs. 500
2.	Buildings and construction	2,500
		<hr/>
Total		Rs. 3,000.
		<hr/>

Of this amount about one-third is available in Chirala and Karanchedu. The remaining the Lord will fetch. So is my prayer and hope. Thus will our Vidya Pita Goshti come into existence. Can’t you, in whom the Lord reveleth look out for kindreds? Please do.

“Our friend, Sjt. Subbaraju may do us a good turn. Kindly look him up and submit my prayer. Kindly put in a word to the big Bhoy, our incorrigible doctor. He may help, and many others. I shall be obliged if they fix up their favour to some specific item in our requirements. Cocanada and Rajahmundry is the House of Lords of the Godavary District. I authorise you to beg there-about on my behalf, of course with no advertisements and ado. Ours is not an institution which is to save or Swarajise a nation. Nor is it an off-spring of the Gandhian Era and Ethic or theology. It has been existing since pre-Gandhian times, though so far, in my dreams and the sands of Ramanagar. It is only now that I am vouchsafed freedom to devote myself to it. And I am determined to do it at all costs and even with no cost. And you will notice mine is too curious a method for the modern to feel comfortable at the thing. Fancy idols are to be the first denizens of the village and the first members of the Goshti. But so they are, whosoever notwithstanding, where I am concerned. If no help is forth-coming, I decided even on thatched sheds and clay basements for the idols. Idol is the concretised ideal.

“.....Please don't forget our Razole friends, with the bowl. The mysterious doctor, the lawyer of generous opulence, the land-lord of innocence and your tiny comrade of unostentatious devotion are all to be bagged with their person or purse or both. Inform Sambamoorthy of the date of the Muhurtham and spy him out whether he has any blessing for our bowl.....

“Our papers will appear in good time, God-willing. Don’t be anxious on their account. Don’t you see the process is now to fix myself up in Ramanagar? Everything else will turn out right afterwards.....

“Invite them all (Bhamidipati and Venkappa) and particularly our Doctor Saheb Gurmurthy and place before him the proposition of the bowl.....

“Kindly look sharp and forget not.”

In a further letter dated 25—2—25, he wrote: “I shall be very grateful if your Ramadandu Committee of Alamur helps me on in the construction of the temples. Only I should be very much obliged if what is taken is not necessarily in the shape of money but better in the shape of kind or form, i.e. either the idols or the flag-staffs or constructional material. The promises, if they are so, had better be in these forms. Of course, money is the only alternative. Please speak to our Lakkaraju Subba Rao Saheb and Kameswara Rao Pantulu also. They are also a trifle interested in ‘idol-worship’, I fancy. The Pydahs also you may approach. The great Chetty Saheb is very much interested, I know, in temples. He might do us a good turn. ....Look out with Ramakaryam.”

The 5th March was eventually changed to 7th; and even then there were small tragedies over the ceremony. The President-elect, Sjt. K. Nageswara



Rao Pantulu could not go, though his Rs. 116 was promptly there. Gopalakrishna himself couldn't "lead" the function; as, unexpectedly, his wife was in pollution. He, however, wrote on the 10th: "The function went off alright. I am settled down to peace, though not plenty, but am thoroughly content with my lot".

This "thorough content" itself shows the deep discontent in his soul; and there is no doubt that, hereafter, the Temple became the ruling passion of his life. "The external programmes of a school, Press, papers, library, members, patrons, elections democracy and what not, have all resolved themselves into a simplified formula, a 'One Word' as he used to call it which, to him at any rate, became the panacea of all ills, and to which he clung tenaciously to the end".

The story of these temples or rather of the infructuous attempts at building these temples, makes an instructive, albeit sad reading.

At first Gopalakrishna hoped that his influence with the Chirala people would be able to get him the necessary finance; but when he approached them, the richer of them began to excuse themselves, on one plea or other, because Gopalakrishna wanted his Gods to be not mere sectarian or sectional objects of worship; but Universal Gods, i.e. open to all castes, creeds and religions, irrespective of birth, provided one had the faith and sought them with devotion and dedication. And the reason for it is

simple. For, according to the orthodox tradition, certain sections of our people,—particularly the Untouchables and unapproachables—are prohibited from entering the temples in our country; and the conservative Vysyas, who, next to the Zamindars are the patrons of these temples, follow this narrow practice. And when Gopalakrishna approached the Vysya merchants of Chirala for help for his Temples for all, irrespective of caste or creed, those gentlemen forgot even the duty they owed to their great hero, and one after another, began to excuse themselves, saying that they couldn't support institutions based on such heterodox notions. Some of them argued with him; some put forth silly excuses; a few gave ridiculously small sums; and even the one man who promised to build a temple for one of the Gods, managed to evade, so much so Gopalakrishna got, in all, just a couple of hundreds for his grand Temple-scheme, which was of course spent promptly for the opening ceremony. Meanwhile even the "Bowl" which had gone the rounds had to return empty, owing primarily to the "politicians' mischief", some of the No-change friends of Andhra even going the length of inventing arguments against the Temple-idea itself, saying: Are there not temples enough in the country? and so forth; and even the name of Mahathmaji was dragged in for the purpose of discrediting the Gopalakrishna scheme—though Gandhiji himself repudiated that he was "wholly unaware of many things" mentioned by his lieutenants!

Thus neither Gopalakrishna nor his "Bowl" could get in any money for those Temples and consequently the "constructive programme" had to go unfulfilled during the three and odd years of his life. Meanwhile his health steadily grew from bad to worse; and when the hope arose that possibly he might live if at least one of the temples was built, he sold away his silver-plate and one more of his wife's jewels, and began erecting the walls, in one of those many fits of temper to which he became a victim in those days. The foundations were finished; and even the outer walls had risen two or three feet high; when he discovered some flaw in the calculations (architectural) or the construction and he ordered an immediate dismantling of the whole thing. In June 1927, when one or two friends enquired of him what they could do for him, Gopalakrishna gave out his ideas in a letter which was published in one of the vernacular weeklies of the period; and sometime before his death he also published in the Andhra Pathrika an Appeal to his fellow-countrymen, which practically is his last Will and Testament wherein he declared that it was his solemn wish to construct those temples in Ramanagar, and dedicate the Ramanagar land of about twenty acres to those Temples; but, as his health was getting critical, if he wouldn't be able to do it himself in his life-time, he begged of his Andhra countrymen to kindly respect his last wishes and see that they would be attended to even after his death. The idea was revived by one or two friends after the death of Gopalakrishna in June 1928 and after; but the wicked Memorial Committee which volunteered to take charge of his posthumous

works, wouldn't allow the grass to grow under their feet; and subsequently the perpetual pilgrimage to jails of our patriots has entailed the postponement of the Ramanagar temples *sine die*; and in view of the latter conversion even of our Mahathmas to the temple idea, it is hoped the day of the coming of the Ramanagar Gods will not be far off.

Such is the historical aspect of the story of the Ramanagar Temples, which constituted one of Gopalakrishna's chief aspirations—in fact, the Temple-idea was there in his mind at least from 1919-20. His ideas about the rationale underlying a Temple are well-known and may be briefly summarised. An idol to him, was a “concretised ideal.” And the process in which he discovered it is thus. According to our tradition, a Guru or Teacher is the God-to-be worshipped of every man, as the husband is of every woman. But in this age of Kali, such Gurus to adore, serve, imitate, follow, in life are a rarity; and for himself, after long and deep search, he hoped he had found one in the Mahathma, whom he proclaimed an Avatar in 1921. But he proved, as a claimant for the Divine Throne, devoid of at least three out of the ‘Nine Qualities’—*Navarasaspathi*;—and when “the incomparably greatest man on Earth” himself was short of being a true or Ideal Guru, he concluded, it was best to choose one in a form other than the human; and, what form of it more suited to our genius and traditions than the “life-less”, “inanimate” idol, hallowed with use, glorified by breakers, the object of worship not only in India, but in fact, all the world over, in Temples,

churches, statues, busts, bronzes and so forth? The plastic idol thus being free from any egotistical self-willing, can best symbolise one's ideal and aspiration; nay, in the absence of the Guru, the human longing for self-fulfilment which is eternal, can be best realised in the stone or the marble, the bronze or the golden image to which our devotion and dedication shall supply the missing life and, therefore, shall they live in a more than human sense—nay, they shall be our immortals and eternal. And he found that this was the method not only of the traditional Hindus, and at least of the Catholic Christianity—to which he had a distinct partiality as the devotional Church—but also that the idea was potential of solving many a human problem confronting the world at present, in its political, social, economic, philosophical and even its scientific aspects, and to restart the world on the path of a new Dharma,— the gospel, in fact of his Universal Brahmanism! And, therefore, he declared:

“Our Nation lives in its pilgrimages. National life is nowhere not even in Mahatma Gandhi's ‘Congresses’, and ‘masses.’ It lives by the temple, it moves by the pilgrims' path, it sleeps in the feasts surfeit of the festival. Don't you deceive yourself, my dear Reader, by imagining it is elsewhere than in this. I assure you, I beseech you to believe, it is there and nowhere else. Have you seen with a deep gaze what is about on a festival and beside a temple? It is a grand resolution of society into its ultimate reality. One path, one faith, one continuous hurrah make up the great demonstration of its

abiding Oneness. The Nation is *re-solved*. The Nation's life is verily the Pilgrims' Progress..... The Nation is only there and nowhere because it hails in its lakhs and millions without any propaganda or pity of its mentors. The Nation is there and nowhere, because its logic is lost in love, its science is sunk in its ideal; because its opinions are drowned in its faith, its demands in its worship, its aspirations in its dreams, its hopes and fears in its deliverance from them, the Nation is there and nowhere.

“The Temple is the Nation's synthesis in the concrete. It is the embodied ideal of the race”.  
(Article on ‘Antarvedi’.)



## CHAPTER XXVII

## Last Intrusion into Politics.

“Round about and round about  
And round about, I spin.”

Many battles and many wars are waged in this world, and much blood has been shed by mankind for the sake of this Earth; and historians tell us how many times “strategic points” like the Punjab in India or Alsace-Lorraine in Europe had tempted, nay, had actually seduced the neighbouring kings and how those monarchs who wooed those lands had paid it with their lives and the lives of millions of their men. This Earth, we say, is a tempting Beauty. She tempts our men, she tempts our monarchs. And what is more, she entices even our sages and saints.

This affords us the clue direct as to why Gopalakrishna, even after his deeper realisation, adverted again and again into politics, nay, still dabbled in what he called political charlatanry. It was a weakness: still it was a human weakness. And he paid dearly for it, in the end. For it cost him his life. And, too, Indian politics is today poorer for his loss.

Being the drifter into the political field, we have seen he was kicked out of the Provincial Congress Executive at a meeting of the Committee held

in May 1925 at Rajahmundry. The circumstances of this ejection do not concern us here; but a general idea of the position can be had from the protests of a member of the Committee at that time.

“The Committee, unfortunately, cannot be said to have successfully solved the problem of personal jealousies, mutual ill-will and recrimination that have become well-nigh a feature of our Congress life for the last two years. On the contrary, the House itself became a victim to the pious professions of partisan patriots, who all the while protest they are lovers of peace. But all the compromise was only on one side.

“To be more definite, I cannot congratulate the House—on the other hand, I feel it my duty to oppose it tooth and nail,— on its policy of purposive elimination of Sjt. Gopalakrishnayya from the helm of leadership in the Andhradesha. I know it will be protested that none was against him personally and, in that “invertebrate innocence” mood which Sjt. Gopalakrishnayya himself had noticed in his ‘Sadhana’ sometime ago, everybody might sigh that it was unfortunate that the House could not return him! But I don’t think it is possible to deceive the world any longer. And almost everybody who is anybody in the Andhra Congress today surely knows the steady history of the severe persecution of Mr. Gopalakrishnayya, deliberately connived and aimed at by several of our Andhra leaders and at the long-last-successful attempt to eliminate



him from out of our Congress Executive if not from our public life altogether. You yourself know how by ejecting him from the A.I.C.C., he was deprived of another chance of election to the General Secretaryship of the Indian National Congress in 1923; what calumnies were spread by interested leaders to deprive him of a chief Secretaryship in the A.P.C.C. last year; what all took place at the time of his election to the A.P.C.C. Secretaryship last year and after, while he was Secretary; you also know probably by now, the famous history of the 'Sadhana' article entitled "National Life in Andhra" and its consequent effusion on the part of Sjt. Kaleswara Rao in the famous "Adjournment Motion" of January 1925 and Desabhakta Venkatappayya's ultimatum to Sjt. Gopalkrishnayya as Secretary. You know the history of his bills, of his treatment as Secretary, and of his existence as a worker. You also can realise the fate of his views, not because there is anything wrong with them but because they originate from Mr. Gopalakrishnayya. The records were brought away by Mr. Satyanarayana before the House declared itself against him. And it was through an accident that he could at all come to the Committee both last year and now.

"This was up to the eve of the last A.P.C.C. meeting. The Rajahmundry meeting was, I should say, a climax in this diplomatic defeating of Mr. Gopalakrishnayya. The rejection of the Cabinet Resolution was itself a check against him,—for a Sambamurti as President, it is almost common knowledge, will always choose Mr. Gopalakrishnayya as

one of his cabinet. But that ought to be prevented even at the cost of the Congress work. The reduction of the number of Secretaries from three to one was, I am sure, a direct hit against him.....and the greatest of it was in shutting him off from the Congress Executive, by bringing in Sjt. Prakasam as a rival. I do not think Mr. Prakasam himself will feel proud of his new honour. For it is a matter of common knowledge that where provision had to be made for members from Madras, either Mr. Nageswara Rao or Mr. Prakasam, Godavary or Guntur were never encroached upon; but there was the Agency in old days and the Ceded Districts later on. And not a word of thanks for past services or a tear of regret for one's elimination! And the Ex-President of the P.C.C. openly and publicly says, evidently to prejudice the House, that Mr. Gopalakrishnayya had "no faith in khaddar", despite the fact that khaddar, in its true sense of course, was an article of faith in his religious ideal, that the robes of his Ramadandu were of self-spun khadi, and even with regard to the franchise he publicly declared, in the columns of his 'Sadhana', that 'in it we have at last a true Indian contribution to the democratic idealism of humanity. It is a great equaliser of things, whom the inequity of man had so dodged out of his way. Its adoption was an event of first-class importance to our future public life, and may we venture to say, the future public morality of the world, too'.

"I need not pursue this point at any further length.....Suffice it to say, that the rank prejudice with which the last elections were conducted, with

the result of Mr. Gopalakrishnayya's elimination from the Andhra Congress Executive, is an indication of a disease that goes to the very depths. And all this while the whole constitution is set aside and even elections put off—and rightly too in my opinion—to give a chance for Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya to come up to the executive.

“I don't wish to be understood that Mr. Gopalakrishnayya will be in the least sorry for the omission of his name. Probably he has gained greater freedom from this dirt. But that the House has virtually stultified itself by thus not accommodating this principal worker as one among its 34 or 36 Governors,—

“I consider the omission as a great blunder. indeed, not because his presence won't be there to disturb the equanimity of a self-composed and self-complacent House, but because I feel—and I feel it most strongly—that some of his ideas are essential for the growth of a healthy and strong public life in Andhradesha. His Ramadandu is an instance in point. I don't feel that there is anybody else who can be at its head. Nor are we in a position to work out his ideas without his presence being with us.

“Either there is a place for these ideas in the Andhra Congress or there is not. And so far as I am concerned,—and I know there are others of my way of thinking—we shan't associate ourselves with a committee or organisation that puts a rigid ban on the views generally associated with Mr. Gopalakrishnayya, because we believe it is a new philosophy—a

new synthesis of life that Mr. Gopalakrishnayya is propounding and preaching on behalf of Young Andhra." (Letter of G.V.S. to Mr. B. Sambamurty).

Before proceeding further, a word may be said about what happened at the P.C.C. meeting against which the above was a protest. After Gopalakrishna was ousted as a Secretary of the Committee, the election of members to the Executive came up. These were elected district by district, and for the Guntur constituency, formerly there were three members among whom Desabhakta and Gopalakrishna were two. When the nominations for the new year came up, the name of Desabhakta was proposed and unanimously agreed to as the out-going President; then there was a Non-Brahmin, who as *Non-Brahmin*, was indispensable even for the Congress politics; and for the third seat, Gopalakrishna's name was proposed, when a mean manouvring began from the No-change side. None from the district was found strong enough to defeat Gopalakrishna, though he himself was not present at the meeting and his opponents had a majority in numbers. Therefore, the name of Mr. T. Prakasam was dragged in from distant Madras and Gopalakrishna was knocked out! While at the very same meeting, Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya, who was found disqualified for a 'Cabinet' seat from East Krishna, because East Kistna refused to elect him as its representative on the A.P.C.C., was let in by a back-door; and even then, when the representatives of the district resolutely opposed to having him on the Executive,

the matter was deliberately left over to the next meeting when, doubtless, some consideration was shown to the Doctor for his indefatigable talents and work.

It will be interesting to recall how Gopalakrishna himself received this dismissal from the Congress Executive.

“Though surprised to learn I am elected to the Committee, I am happy I am not in the executive. First, there is nothing to execute, and all what I can and ought to execute is best done outside where the God of all franchises reigns. And why should we take umbrage at the statement, cowardly and false though it be, that I had no faith in khaddar? The lies of Desabhaktas are as inexorable as the Himalayan blunders of Mahatmas. Sambamurti is already threatening to be the prize-boy! Don’t be sorry,.....nothing is done in that committee, all gather and damn each other and themselves. No more harm can be apprehended to the country or its genuine workers. Don’t you know when the body dies, the parasites still continue to thrive!.....No more of Congress Committees for our minds. Let us think free, live free, and serve free ourselves, our God, and if possible our race”.

“They have really done me a very genuine service in ignoring me or hounding me out of the Congress ‘circles’. And these ‘circles’, we know, are not of much consequence, as they are at the present moment composed of not more than a handful of malcontents, most of them awful ignoramuses, though

some of them are of an amicable variety and the rest awful blighters. We needn't mind them in the least. What if they hound me out? What if I am 'defeated diplomatically'?.....

"The position is: if they aimed at some freedom for themselves to work by hounding me out, it is something and even commendable, though it is at least a gross misjudgment, but I think they merely know how to fight, though not whom and how. ....

"I stood merely for fairness, comradeship and humanity in the administration of Congress ranks. Some serve it by adherence, and some perhaps by severance. And I come under the latter heading. Excepting.....very few.....the rest of the members of that Committee have evidently made up their minds that I am undesirable as anything in that committee. What harm is there in that decision? I shan't worry a bit for it. I can even go the length of agreeing with it, though for different reasons. And when there is all amiability without me, why should we grudge it? If such a Committee does not turn out any work, then it will disappear very soon. Why not give it a chance either way? and give me also a chance to grow happy with all A.P.C.C. thoughts vanishing off my mind?

"This much, however, is certain, that a warrant alone, enforceable physically, perhaps by the existing Government, will draw me out to gaze upon that A.P.C.C. and its meetings or doings"

The above was in June 1925; but a couple of months more, and the whirl-gig of Time brought the 'voluntary liquidation' of the Sambamurthy Cabinet in the A.P.C.C., and a fresh election of the Committee with a purely Swarajist consciousness had to be called in! And this unexpected change in the country once again dragged Gopalakrishna into the political current, in spite of all his solemn resolves to "extinguish himself as a political species".

It is difficult to say how exactly Gopalakrishna felt at this sudden and altogether unexpected change in the Andhra Congress politics. But there are good reasons to believe that possibly he was not much enthused over the change. And left to himself, in all likelihood, he would not even have attended the new meeting of the A. P. C. C. For, firstly, he was not doing well in health; and secondly also, he had practically lost his faith in these organisations. But one of his "best and life-long friends" forced him to the meeting, for the purpose of "taking charge of the Congress affairs", promising him, incidentally, his support for the P.C.C. Presidency.

It became a test of duty to Gopalakrishna. He was not of course anxious or worried about any posts, inside or outside the Congress; but was it not a duty to have an unfettered chance, as President, of serving both the Congress and the country? And in an unguarded moment, he yielded to this friend's persuasions and proceeded to Masulipatam, where the A. P. C. C. was to meet along with the Andhra Conferences of that year.

Sjt. Sambamurthy formally handed over charge of the Committee; and on behalf of the Swarajists, Gopalakrishna took it over. Then came the question of elections to the A. I. C. C. and the Andhra Executive. Though they constituted a strong party, the new comers did not desire to abuse their power; and they gave a reasonable quarter to their opponents on the A.I.C.C. rolls; but where they claimed an undue share they were put down mercilessly and defeated by thumping majorities. Till that time, the "life-long friend" was as good as his word to Gopalakrishna; but when the psychological moment arrived for the election of the Presidentship of the Committee, one gentleman moved an adjournment of the President's election till the other office-bearers were elected. The object was clear, *viz.*, to elect Gopalakrishna as Secretary first, and elect another for the Presidentship later on. And the "friend" connived at it; got himself elected as the Treasurer, and for the Secretary's place, Gopalakrishna's name was proposed, seconded and supported by the top-men, including that 'friend', who but a few hours ago had dragged down Gopalakrishna, promising all his best support for getting him the Presidentship of the Committee.

Gopalakrishna felt puzzled and naturally protested. Then it was suggested that Mr. T. Prakasam who had been formerly a President of the Committee, and who recently joined the Swarajya Party, might be elected as President with Gopalakrishna as Secretary. And the "friend" declared it would be an "ideal choice"! Gopalakrishna remonstrated



again that it wouldn't suit him; that it would be difficult for him to pull on with Mr. Prakasam. But the "friend" was adamant, and himself as Treasurer, volunteered to arbitrate between the President and Secretary, should differences arise between them. Gopalakrishna felt he was placed in a very awkward and delicate situation; and at last he gave way.

This new Secretaryship of the A.P.C.C. for Gopalakrishna lasted for a period of six months, during three of which practically he was too ill to attend to any work personally. The first incident of this new regime was his meeting with Mr. C.R. Reddy M.A., (Cantab), who at that time was a distinguished member of the Andhra Working Committee, which met at Nellore in December, 1925. Mr. Reddy is a distinguished Non-Brahmin gentleman of reputed culture; was formerly a Professor and Inspector-General of Education in Mysore; in 1924-25, he was a member of the Madras Legislative Council, and had but lately joined the Congress at the time of the above changes in the A.P.C.C.; and latterly he also became the first Vice-Chancellor of the Andhra University, which he resigned in sympathy with the National struggle of 1930. Gopalakrishna had heard of him, of course, but practically they never met before. At this time, Gopalakrishna was thinking of getting into contact with Mr. Reddy for enlisting his support to the Goshti Ideal and Life; and in course of his letter dated 21-6-1925, he actually wrote to a friend: "I shall acquaint Mr. C.R. Reddy with all that is to be known of this

(Goshti) idea and see if he can be one.....I fancy Mr. C.R. Reddi may not condescend, but, if he does, he is quite a desirable member."

Mr. Reddy was elected a member of the Andhra executive in the Masulipatam meeting of the A.P.C.C., at the instance of Gopalakrishna himself. Mr. Reddy attended the Nellore meeting of the Working Committee; and there were two or three passages-at-arms between the two stalwarts. Gopalakrishna yielded on all counts, for he desired not to be rude or discourteous to the new-comer, who would naturally come with a delicate mental constitution. Mr. Reddy probably did not join the Congress as a new zealot; for, if he did, he would have no fault-finding or picking-up-holes in the affairs of the Congress. And it is possible that he joined the Congress in 1925 for diplomatic reasons—with a qualified sympathy of course, for the cause, but really intent upon making use of it for his United Nationalist Party in the Madras Legislative Council. But Gopalakrishna took him to be a new convert. Mr. Reddy began indulging in almost a cheap and cynical criticism of the Congress and its work. Gopalakrishna allowed Mr. Reddy to have his way; and, as far as we remember, he offered only one mild dissent in that meeting. The subject for discussion was the P.C.C. funds. Mr. Reddy remarked that the funds raised in 1921 had all been wasted away! Gopalakrishna suggested that the 1921 movement was in the nature of a spending one, and not a saving one: sometimes we would even become *antar-vahini*! For meeting the current expenses,

Mr. Reddy proposed that each of the districts should contribute a hundred Rupees. Gopalakrishna suggested it might be put at Rs. 116. At once Mr. Reddy retorted: "This is a thing which I can't understand. I don't want these superstitions in all things". Gopalakrishna managed to put Rs. 116 for all other districts; but as Mr. Reddy wouldn't yield, Chittoor would contribute only Rs. 100!

This was a very trivial incident, indeed; but it shows all the difference between the two types of intellect. Both of them were M.A.'s, very brilliant, and each distinguished in his own way. But Gopalakrishna was specialist in Eastern lore and tradition also, while Mr. Reddy swore by the western ideas alone which he imbibed while he was at Cambridge. Thus while Gopalakrishna knew that by prescribing the 116, 1116 etc. notation, he was reviving Indian traditions which had been slumbering in the archives of our orthodoxy, Mr. Reddy wouldn't budge except by the decimated system of French reckoning. But, to our intelligensia, all Indian traditions are silly superstitions, and the "intellectual refuse of the West" is the only rational and scientific truth!

In the evening, Mr. Reddy was to speak on the 'Present Political Situation' at a public meeting. The address lasted for an hour and quarter; and it was an elaborate plea for everybody joining and strengthening the United Nationalist Party! At the end of the lecture, Gopalakrishna was pressed to say a few words. He had fever at this time; but all the same, he sat on a chair and began his rambling

thoughts. For a full fifteen minutes, he projected disconnected threads into the audience. There was no coherence of idea, no sequence of thought; it was a mere jumble of ideas, unconnected with one another. Everybody began to feel the incoherence of it; and what was more to the purpose, its relation to the subject of the day was being loudly whispered even by Mr. Reddy, in the small circle of friends gathered around him. But suddenly Gopalakrishna read a verse from the Andhra Bhagavatam, beginning with ఆదిన్ శ్రీసతి కొప్పవై etc. to illustrate his method and with a parenthetical remark that unlike the Euclidean formula, this verse signified the "Indian version of the straight line", he slowly began to gather all the preliminary threads; and it looked as though the magician had first thrown the petals into the air and afterwards converged them into a fine and fragrant blossom! For a full thirty minutes, he held the audience spell-bound. The text of the speech was a vindication of the Ethics of Revolution against which Mr. Reddy had thought fit to indulge cheap and indecorous gibes both at the meeting and prior to that. It was one of the greatest speeches ever delivered by Gopalakrishna; for not only the subject was a grand theme; but he was out to please a great man of culture. At the end of it everybody acclaimed him a hero; and even Mr. Reddy came down of his own accord; warmly shook hands with Gopalakrishna; and is reported to have told his friends that he "had heard some of the greatest orators of the world; but this was easily the best. And it was no wonder that he (Gopalakrishna) moved millions",

After his return from Nellore, Gopalakrishna was still suffering from fever; all the same, he ventured a journey to the Cawnpore Congress, which cost him again a good lump of health and also a heavy strain on his purse. On the 18th and 19th January 1926, there was a meeting of the Provincial Congress Committee at Guntur, where already there was a hitch between the President and the Secretary, which was, however, averted by the timely intervention of the Treasurer friend. The burning question of the day was the Elections to the Legislatures which were fast approaching. The President asked the Secretary to draft a suitable appeal to the country, whereupon Gopalakrishna framed the following "Proclamation":

"To our Andhra fellow countrymen.

"The Indian National Congress in its sessions at Cawnpore has called upon the Nation to send its representatives in full force to the Councils of the bureaucracy to obtain an answer for the very modest demand presented in its behalf; and in case it comes not or cometh unsatisfactory, it has assured itself and its ranks of obtaining satisfaction by means of the Great Discipline and Action which we have learnt and practised with effect these few years.

"The time expected of the reply is about the end of February and we have a glimpse of it already through the Viceregal Prologues and the periodical passages-at-arms on the Council-floor. The Nation is to be in harness fully equipped for any eventuality.

The restart on the Great Path would any moment be upon us. We, therefore, crave the indulgence of our Andhra Fellow Countrymen for having reminded them of the situation and beg their earnest concern and comradeship in the successful accomplishment of our duty.

“We want men; we want money; and we want an undying faith in the Cause. We have to fill the Councils and perhaps gaols. And work is to be commenced straight, immediately. One lakh of Rupees and five thousand volunteers who would pledge to work from now on are the preliminary instalment. Every newspaper will fully mobilize its power and patriotism; every library will constitute itself a base of operations; and every national institution will transform itself into a workshop for the campaign.

“Elections and After is the imperious concern of the Congress, the one institution which despite its possible defects and defections, dares ever keep its head aloft in the service of the Nation; and it deserves supremely well of the Andhras.

“We invite the hastening of our response!”

The President, however, wouldn't allow any such hot stuff; and he himself issued a prosaic and common-place 'Appeal' to the Andhra public to return the Congress candidates in large numbers. The difference in the two was fundamental and profound, because the President's aim was the Elections and no more, while the far-seeing Gopalakrishna chose "Elections and After" as his war-cry.

No wonder that in the Madras Legislative Council, at any rate, soon after the Elections, the Swarajist Councillors, after coquetting with Dr. Subbarayan for sometime, supplied two Ministers to the Government, after first turning traitors to the Congress. But when Gopalakrishna's draft-idea was overruled by the President, naturally he lost his heart in the business; meanwhile his health also became worse; and in April 1926, he formally resigned from the Andhra Congress—this time, as it proved to be, for the final occasion.

Gopalakrishna was elected Chairman of the Reception Committee for the District Conference held at Guntur on 27—2—26. Having been laid up with illness, he couldn't attend the Conference personally; but he sent a short address, welcoming the delegates, which is as brief as it is beautiful in thought and expression. On the subject of the work ahead, he said: "I am of opinion that there are only two questions now to consider. In ancient days, on the eve of the Maha Bharata War, Dharmaraja and others, though they were entitled for Complete Indian Independence సంపూర్ణ భారత స్వామ్రాజ్య లక్ష్మి, couldn't forsake the tranquility of the world, contemplated peace, and begged for the grant of five places for themselves. And likewise, we have also requested the Government to grant us Swaraj. And the reply thereto has come. Therefore, while keeping Peace in view, the future programme for the attainment of Swaraj has got to be determined. This is most important. And secondly, arrangements have

got to be made for sending nationalist members to the Legislatures. May my Lord Sree Ramachandra guide you in these two respects". In the same year he was also elected President of the Andhra Maha Sabha at Ellore, but, owing to illness he had to decline the offer.

Hereafter, Gopalakrishna had practically nothing to do with the Congress, as he was writhing under his illness; and during the spare minute or two he could steal from his terrible suffering, he was thinking of his Temples and his Religion. In June 1927, a friend asked him for his opinion regarding Congress work. Gopalakrishna expressed his views at length in a letter which was published in the papers at that time, from which the following is a free rendering.

"About the Congress and the doings of the Swarajya Party. It will be a bit bold of me to say anything, because for the last two years I have been laid up with illness and have not been taking any part in these affairs. It may be, therefore, impertinent on my part to criticise their actions. Nor do I feel even capable of offering any such criticism. However.....I shall just say a few words for which I crave your indulgence.

"I feel that the Congress has become lifeless and adopting alien aims and methods. That it was a foreign plant in the Indian soil may possibly account for this state of things in that institution. Mahatmaji tried, indeed, to convert it into a real Indian assemblage; but it has again assumed its



original form. Unless many great men like Gandhiji will be born and serve it with their Tapas, it is impossible to achieve Swaraj in this way. For instance, take the Hindu-Muslim Unity and the Brahmin and Non-Brahmin Problem. Everybody says that the hearts must unite. Is it possible to achieve it, with the help of the Votes and Resolutions of our capitalistic friends and their institutions? They may be obtained through the grace of our men of Tapas. The religious urge has not yet dawned into the administration of our institutions. Akbar, Nanak, Kabir and others tried to achieve Unity in this country, but they failed. In recent times, Gandhiji attempted to unify the whole of India. But he too could not shake the foundations. He has not been able to enunciate a new Law and synthesis. Therefore, it is best for humbler folks like ourselves to bide our time and pray to God and wait for His Mercy. The Congress is like a termagant wife to the alien Government; and I suppose she will be going on like this till the end of all time, now playing, now cursing, and showing her displeasure in various ways. Those who like it, may coquet with her when the rulers are not too harsh or pressing. Till the Congress assumes a religious form, it is impossible to obtain our salvation through it.

“The Swarajists originally did not abandon the path of Tapas. If the No-changers were Brahma Rishis they became Raja Rishis. But latterly among their leaders, one has died (Mr.Das); another has been suffering from old age etc.; and a number of them have lost their virility in various ways. There.

fore defects arose in their aims and methods. For if they really believe that questions like the Hindu-Muslim etc. Unity can be solved by means of votes and resolutions, as soon as they entered the Councils, they should have declared their futility; formed a new Assembly of all the elected members (filling up vacancies through Congress nomination); and declared to the People: "Countrymen! We, the members elected by the electorates of the country, recognising the futility of these Governmental institutions, have constituted ourselves into an Independent Indian Assembly (or Republic), on the same lines, and filled up vacancies with other distinguished national servants and are endeavouring to establish Swaraj in India at an early date. Therefore, you who gave us your votes, pay us your taxes also; give us your recognition as the real Indian Legislature, adopt our laws and help us to wrest Swaraj from the unwilling hands of the bureaucracy. Towards this end, nonviolent Non-cooperation, Satyagraha etc., shall be our weapons". And with such a declaration they should have jumped into the fire. Prior to our offering a 'National Demand', we should get ready in this manner and then ask for a reply from the Government.

"Such is my heart's desire. But instead of that, to ask the opponents to offer their bid; and then play with it; and knowing that they won't give their terms, still to cling on to them; and adopt all sorts of diplomatic games with their ministers; and to waste our time and energy in the drafting, amending

and revising of our political constitution—is rather a ridiculous affair.

“One word more, and that is about Khaddar. Mahathmaji swears by Khaddar and Khaddar and nothing more than Khaddar. But unfortunately even that position does not appeal to me, somehow. I am a devotee of Sree Ramachandra. His ways, therefore, serve to me as models. Hanuman went in quest of Sree Sita Devi and found her starving and emaciated. But he did not supply her with food or raiment. Ramachandra himself did not give any ‘message’ to that effect. Even during the war-time, there were no such efforts made. If the Goddess of Indian Liberty is emaciated, then, why on Earth should we seek to give her food through Khaddar? When she re-attains her real Estate—she will once again get to her full glory. Possibly she has taken to a vow of fasting! The present-day famines, draught, scarcity of crops and milk, increase of disease etc. are indicative of that! It is a well-known fact how the yield has become quite disproportionately thinned to all our efforts in this country. Did the Government take away that yield? It is useless to try to throw the blame upon them. Our only duty should be to re-establish her *Samsara* as of old. It is futile to say that there is no path other than that of Khaddar”.

To complete this epitaph on the Congress Constructive Programme—which, an eminent countryman of ours once declared, “seems to construct nothing”—we will quote here just a passage from the *Ramayanam* story which has been referred to by

Gopalakrishna. According to the Maha Bharatham version of it, when Sree Ramachandra and His Army reached the Southern Sea the great King asked His lieutenant, Sugriva as to how to cross that huge ocean. Then several people suggested several "constructive programmes". One of them said building boats; another constructing ships and so forth. And, says the Epic, the Lord simply smiled at these suggestions and said:

"What you have said is good, indeed;

But it is imposible to build boats and ships sufficient for this mighty Army;

And if we try to cross this wide sea of hundred  
*Yojanas*,

The enemy is sure to fall upon us and defeat our purpose;

Moreover, such programmes befit only the petty tradesman;

They cannot enhance the glory of the valiant;

Therefore, this method does not appeal to me;

I shall now declare my method."

And, the story goes, Ramachandra declared that he would take to the conquering of the sea by *Tapas*;

by virtue of which, he crossed the sea and got back  
His Queen.\*

వ. . . . . కప్పిసైన్యంబు గతివయదినంబులకు దక్షిణోదధితీరంబు  
సేరి రెండగు వారా శియుంబోలె ఘూర్ణిల్లుచుండె నంతరాఘ  
వుండు రవితనయుంజూచి యిట్లనియె

క॥ మనబలమును సతిబహుళము  
వననిధియును దుస్తరంబు వానరవర యి  
వ్వననిధిఁ గడచు నుపాయము  
మనకొక్కటి నిశ్చయింపుమా తగుభంగిన్॥

తే॥ అని విచారించునెడ గొందరధిపుఁజూచి  
జడధిబలితంపుఁ దెప్పలఁగడతమనిరి  
ఘనపుఁ గలములు సమకట్టి కడతమనిరి  
కొందరంతయు విని రఘునందనుండు॥

సీ॥ అల్లననగుచు నిట్లనియె మీ చెప్పటల్  
దగిన యుపాయంబు లగున యయ్యి  
నగణితంబైన యీ హరిసైన్యములకెల్లఁ  
గలములు దెప్పలు వలయునన్ని  
సమకట్టు టరయ వశక్యంబు శతయోజ  
నంబుల పరపైన యెంబురాశిఁ  
గలములఁ దెప్పలఁ గడచుచో రిపుతోటి  
యెడరునఁ బైఁ బడి పొడువకున్నె

ఆ॥ యదియుఁ గాక యెల్పులగు వణిగ్జనముల  
యోజ శూరతతికిఁ దేజమగునె  
కాన నాడు మతఘ్న గాదివ్విధంబు నా  
మనసు నిశ్చయంబు వినుడుమీరు.

Will our 'Constructive Programmers' be wise at least hereafter?

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చ॥ వ్రతముధరించి నిష్కముపవాసవిధిం గొలుతున్ సముద్రు నా  
కిరడు ప్రియంబుతోడఁ దెరువిచ్చుట యంతసకలైనేని మే  
లితరునిఁగా ననుండులఁచినేని యమానుషరోషవేషదీ  
వితశరవహ్నినిజ్జలముఁ బీల్చెద బ్రేల్చెద నొక్కవేల్పిడిన్॥

(ఆరణ్య వర్వము 43-47).



## CHAPTER XXVIII

## Closing years of life (1926-27)

In this chapter, we shall read of some random thoughts on Gopalakrishna's life at this period, which, we have already said, was one of illness and suffering.

The ailment was diagnosed as an advanced stage of Tuberculosis in June 1926. He suffered very much, of course, both from the disease as also from poverty. But all the suffering he had himself: at worst, he allowed just a few of them who were by his side to share a portion of it. It was a terrible ordeal and none could approach him in his fits—not even his wife. If anybody came near him, especially in the earlier stages, he would break out like a volcano, and at once there was a fit of cough which convulsed him and took up his temperature by three or four degrees. Of course he did require some service, for giving medicine, getting food or water, helping him to bath or sleep, massaging, etc. which a few of those who were by his side willingly gave him

But while himself unhappy, he always tried to make others who came to see him happy. Whenever a visitor came, it was really wonderful how he forgot all his misery. For all appearances, in the company of outsiders, he was the 'good old chap'! and not a trace of his inner misery or suffering could be detected either from his talk or demeanour. And his sole aim was always to make his vi-

sitors feel quite at home, and comfortable. One result of it was that, even when a few minutes talking was prohibited by Doctors, he would go on talking for hours: and when the visitors left, there was actually a 3 to 4 degrees rise of temperature! 'Big' men came to see him for a few minutes; but stayed on for hours, enjoying his feverish talking. And the fever only added to the intensity of its effect! So much so that those who came to him in his illness, went away satisfied that he was not going to die! Everybody was hoping that at last he would be able to resist even death. Of course the visitors were kindly; but he himself wouldn't leave them. And hearty good talk he loved more than his life itself. Thus he went on alternating between merriment and misery!

One instance, where he wanted that others should not, as far as possible, witness the darker side of his life was where he demanded that one, Mr. Krishna Rao who came to stay with him should go out and seek life. And he was particularly anxious that his four-year-old boy, Ramachandra, should witness nothing of his misery.

But, if he was ever anxious to make his visitors happy, it should not be supposed that he did not make any distinction between a worthy guest and an undesirable intruder. And a typical instance is, in a particularly dark night, when a young man who came to "sing away" his illness, was mercilessly driven out, without being shown any quarter for even a few minutes. And for achieving his purpose ef-



fectively, the patient even feigned an illness which he hadn't at that time!

There is an aspect of his illness which was much criticised and probably misunderstood. It was his practice about his diet and medicines. It was freely alleged that he never cared for the prescribed diet; and Gopalakrishna himself possibly helped to spread that impression. But the criticism itself was ill-founded. To give but one glaring example, a Brahmin that he was by birth and profession, and a strict vegetarian for decades, at the biddance of the doctors he took not only to egg but even mutton and soup. The instance was not a solitary and exceptional one but typical. For a disease which was chronic and eating in the extreme—nay, which required rich and luxuriant foods for quick consumption,—we must say, on the whole he observed his dietetic restrictions fairly well. But when critics faced him with a caution to be more careful in these matters, he laughed it off, saying that till the end of his life he would go on feasting with all the dishes of the six *Rasas*!

Likewise, it was alleged that Gopalakrishna had either refused to take medicines or that he was taking them irregularly. Here, too, it was a case of ignorance alike of the actual facts as of the methods and circumstances involved. To show that he was innocent, we may just point to the long list of the quack-doctors who handled him during this long and critical part of his life. He was difficult of accepting a doctor in the beginning; but once he had tested and was satisfied with one, he gave him the most loyal and faithful trial, no matter how stupid

or humble that quack was. And, what was more, where everybody was treating him for anything other than the real disease! Nor did he forsake a doctor till he himself confessed defeat and left. And who-ever the doctor, he swallowed even the most bitter things just as he would take in sugar-pills; and it is well-known how he took every dose of that terrible పంచతి క్త కషాయము with that punctiliousness and devotion which is worthy of a chronic coffee-drinker! And, if by accident, there was an irregularity on any day, he felt greatly troubled and was worrying himself whether it would seriously tell upon his health. And, too, it is remarkable how frankly and unreservedly he confided in his doctor, even though they were, in several cases, of the most underserving variety; and, if there were "life's little interludes" between the doctor and the patient, it was mainly because he himself was not a lifeless mummy and moreover, none of the doctors had correctly diagnosed his disease till he was well on the way to collapse.

It may also be mentioned at this time that one chief source of this misunderstanding of Gopalakrishna was due to his faith. He stuck on to the very end to the indigenous system of Ayurvedic medicine, which was an article of faith with him, and he never broke the rule, at least during this period of his illness. It was his confirmed conviction that the Indian medicines—Ayurveda and Unani, both—are vastly superior to the allopathic recipes; and he used to say: "If a system which had served millions and millions of our countrymen through ages can-

not save one's life, then it matters not if one dies." He recognised, however, that, like all things Indian, our medicines too and our medicoes in particular, had degenerated largely, and we find mostly quackery pervading the land. And it was also his confirmed view, which he observed in actual practice, that the westerners have of late stolen a march over us in India, in respect of external diagnosis; and while not under-valuing, in any degree, the great use of the pulse-test—*Nadi*—he believed that the western science has developed instruments of fine sensitivity, which might be very well utilised for verification of the *Nadi*-observations. So much so, he was fond of saying: "an allopath for consultation, and ayur-vaiddya for treatment" would be an ideal combination. He had considerable respect for the Unani system of medicine also, which, he believed, was equally deep and thorough; and at one time, he even wished that he could consult an expert like the late Hakimji Ajmal Khan in his own case.

Another charge that was being repeatedly made against Gopalakrishna was that he killed himself practically by refusing to move out of Ramnagar! and there were those who said that a change to a 'Tubercular Sanitarium' like Madanapalli could have done him much good. But Gopalakrishna insisted till a late stage, upon staying in Ramnagar; in fact, he would accept a treatment on that condition only. And there were several good reasons for it. First, Ramnagar supplied him with a sentimental satisfaction, which, in such cases, was no small

factor. Again, experience proved that when once or twice he actually went out of Ramnagar for a trial, he became worse actually and had to come back a humbled man. Then again for going to Madanapalle or even Madras, there was the question of finance, which was an insoluable problem in his case. Next, at least a few experts have pronounced Ramnagar a hydro; and Major Sastri was definitely of opinion that Gopalakrishna could survive so long, because he stayed at Ramnagar. Lastly, it is also not to be forgotten that even in these sanitariums, a large percentage of the cases have proved to be failures.

All this, of course, is not to say that Gopalakrishna had the benefit of the most expert treatment available in the land, either ayurvedic or allopathic. In fact, we have already seen that till he was far advanced in his illness, there was no proper diagnosis at all. And even after the diagnosis, we cannot say that he ever had the luxury of an expert treatment. For one thing, he wouldn't touch the medicines of our allopaths, who are our State's progeny. And secondly, he was still too-misunderstood and too-maligned a man even to be seriously considered as being ill! And there were all sorts of cock-and-bull stories about him, which could wear away even a willing friend of a Doctor to come of his own accord. And, too, in our slave-mentality, the life of a Gopalakrishna was yet too small a factor for the concern of our South Indian elite, while streams of visitors would flow, daily bulletins rain, and there would be thundering messages from everywhere, if it should be the illness of any North

Indian boss! As a friend wrote to him in those days: "For a man so faithful (i.e. full of the God-faith), we have got till now, what I am constrained to call, but 'unfaithful' healers. None of them. .... is of that Tapas which can 'save your soul', even if it cannot save your body..... But who is there so good, so great, so beautiful to inspire this mad 'Pearl of the Andhradesa'?" And it is to be regretfully recorded in passing, that, throughout this period, he had not got a "doctor deserving of the patient", though it is remarkable how patiently he accommodated himself even to the veriest tyro in the field, whom Providence had thrown in his way.

In this tragic drama, there was doubtless the part of Poverty which was, indeed, well played. The disease was such as would require, metaphorically speaking, elephants to eat; for consumption, it is well-known, *consumes* quickly, and to counter-act its mischief, fresh supplies would be necessary to strengthen health and vanquish disease. But in his case, rank poverty was staring him not only in the face, but actively in the belly! Of course, there were doles meted out now and then: but they were mere "~~doles~~". And, too, more than once he had even to ~~refuse~~ these offers of help because of the ill-grace with which they were surrounded. And, really-speaking, it was a terrible problem as to how to get on in those critical and trying times. And, more than once, his letters of the period refer to his want of finance, as for instance: "I am now empty." (Letter dated 16—2—27).

“No improvement yet in health. No money. Absolutely penniless. Looking up to ‘Ramachandra,’ as usual, for something to turn up” (Letter dated 26—5—27).

“6. Finance.—I have Rs. 125 with me. Paddy run out complete. Not even half bag”. (Letter dated 8—11—27).

A few friends, however, did their mite for helping him, among whom the names of Messrs. S. Sreenivasa Iyengar, K. Nageswara Rao Pantulu, Desabhakta K. Venkatappayya Pantulu, and Nadimpalli Subbaraju must be mentioned.

It was in July 1927 that he wrote his “Last Will and Testament” to his Countrymen, the concluding portion of which reads thus: “My physical health is at present tending to the grave. But to all those concerned, I solemnly declare that, before I die, I shall will away all the Ramnagar land to Sree Kodanda Ramaswamy and then only leave this physical body. But if, by chance, it is not going to happen before I die, I beg of my Andhra countrymen to consider this as my Will and Testament and kindly respect my wishes”.

In November, there was a storm which he himself describes in his letter dated 8—11—27: “8. Recent storm: It just spared us. The big Pandal in front of my house (Divan-i-Am) is no more. The main house, however, has kindly behaved. But the southern verandah is falling and the whole thing may give way at the slightest pro-

vocation. Another shed also is gone. Only the cow-shed is remaining. If there is any sense left in me, I must either get out or put up a strong edifice.

“Where shall I go to? Guntur means 30 or 40 rupees a month for the house alone, if at all one could get one! Bapatla is better. I propose trying it. Otherwise Kuchinapudi for my wife and child and Madras or some hospital for myself (as I can't stay at Kuchinapudi). God knows what is going to happen to me”.

In the same letter, he wrote about his health: “Health still miserable. (I spat blood for three days, commencing on the storm-day.....) Cough worse. Anxieties continue. Hope vanishing. Faith shaky. Darkness ahead. I shall close”.

And it was, really, a ‘closing’ too, of this Chapter of his life at Ramnagar\*; for, very soon, he packed up to Guntur to spend the remaining eight months of his life; and he never stirred out of Guntur till the end.

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\* In the latter part of 1926, he experienced at Kuchinapudi, Guntur and Bapatla, but every time he had to return to Ramnagar.

## CHAPTER XXIX.

The End, which was but a Beginning (1928).

క॥ మన సారథి మన సచివుడు

మన వియ్యము మన నఖిందు మన బాంధవుడు॥

మన విభుడు గురుడు దేవర

మనలను దిగనాడి చనియె మనుజాధీశ॥

(భాగవతము)

And the end came, both for Gopalakrishna and our story.

He died on the 10th June, 1928, about 10-45 p.m.

He prepared himself fully for that end, so that when the final call came forth, he might not say that he was not ready.

Apart from the philosophic fortification to freely face death and conquer it—which, in his case was done as early as the Non-cooperation movement—there was an immediate preparation for his end, which extended over two to three months.

For his financial needs, he sold away two or three plots of land and his books with which he purchased a site at Guntur and built a cottage.

At last everything was ready; and *Grihapravesam* was decided upon the 21st May. It was the hottest part of the year; hot winds were blowing day and night; doors and windows had still to be fitted



up; and his friends were warning him not to risk a journey for a fortnight. But he was adamant, for, he had finally decided upon his "reference in space," *i.e.*, the place where he had now to die; and he implored of a casual visitor to get him a carriage. And in spite of his friends, he bolted away to his new abode!

Once he went, his friends soon followed, to help the task of settling down which, owing to the distance of the place from town, couldn't have been an easy matter.

With all that, Gopalakrishna made a good beginning, and very soon he picked up an admiring audience of a couple of hundreds of the poorest men and women belonging to our lowest castes; some of them had worked at his cottage and well; several have heard of his reputation; and others came out of curiosity to see a dying Brahmin, who came near their quarters. And, too there were the Krishna Ashram or the depressed class school and the Jute mill adjoining, whose good managers helped the transition; and there were of course Messrs. N. V. L. N. Rao, S. V. Subba Rao, Machiraju and Mr. Vepa, all of whom were visiting him by turns. The 'Bangalore Acharyulu' who attended upon him once previously, was re-summoned for treatment; and thus he settled down finally to "Peace if not Plenty," in his final bode which was a cottage without doors, only the front one being hastily improvised just to "keep the dog from the door".

The summer that year was very severe; the sun

shone fiercely over his last days on earth; and the poor and unfinished accommodation in his new abode made it particularly irksome in those days. Still, he was quite happy. And so full of life and humour he was that he invited, in honour of his Grihapravesam, all those two or three hundred poor men of the vicinity and at a cost of some forty or fifty Rupees, he fed them sumptuously and even arranged a nocturnal street-play for his and their entertainment.

After Grihapravesam, he lived only for a fortnight more and it was a great struggle with death. For the life which had to live a full hundred years,—thanks to his unworthy Gurus, thanks to his unhappy home, thanks to his ungrateful people and patriots, thanks, too, to his own destiny which visited him in the form of an eating consumption,—had to be cut short to less than forty, and within the few days that still remained for him, the yet active remnants of what we call Life had to wage a deadly battle with the forces of 'Death'. And it was now a fight to the finish. Gradually the relish for food had gone; and a sort of convulsions began, which entwined his hands and feet, arms, legs and body all into one. It was accompanied with a terrible and, even for that great sufferer, quite unbearable pain. And each convulsion made him more humble than before. There was terrible cough and constant temperature throughout: and his end was actually expected to come on the 1st or 2nd of June. But he picked up a bit again; or at least this phase of intense cholic became a normal feature after a few days; and even

while suffering thus, we are told, he was indulging, during intervals, in his usual, pleasant sallies and merry, though now possibly much subdued, conversations with his friends, who had loyally been visiting him during those days.

Meanwhile the day of reckoning had come: it was the 10th of June 1928; and, we are told that, by the rising or setting of the Moon, he said, was a crisis in his life. For the few days previously, the pain and suffering were not so intense, and that day also, which was a Sunday, he began normally. Friends came in the morning and went back for their noon-day meal for they felt there was nothing serious—it was all a lull. But whence was that tiny, dark cloud towards the evening, betokening a mighty storm at hand! It was 4 o'clock p.m., and convulsions began. None of the friends came; and he was in an agony. The Jute Mill Engineer dropped in casually, for an evening chat; but he found Mrs. Gopalakrishna weeping. At once he went back to the Mill; phoned up Messrs. N.V.L.N. Rao, S. V. Subbarao, everybody from the town and the Municipality; but strangely every one was out of doors. By about 5 p.m., the pain abated a bit; the Mill Manager went back and found Gopalakrishna quiet. The Doctor Acharyulu came, with some friends; he examined the pulse; and felt it was beating steady. An hour later, Mr. Rao and others dropped in hurriedly; found him better; and for an hour or more, they all spent an usual, jolly company. Everybody thought that all would still be well. Gopalakrishna alone had some doubts; he

cross-examined the Doctor about the pulse; told him to speak the truth; and asked him point-blank whether the night would pass. The Doctor said he was sure of it. But the patient wouldn't take any risks; so he got a mat by his side; commanded that, if necessity arose, he should be removed thereon; and shortly after, they all left. At about 9 p.m., Mr. Rao and company came back from the town; Gopalakrishna was still in his bed; and there was nothing extraordinary to be noticed. But about 10 o'clock, there was a fit again. Subba Rao and Narasimharao could not even approach the patient: so intense was the suffering this time. After ten minutes of terrible hooping, a huge phlegm was spat out. A moment of respite; then it came again; cough and convulsion combined; the Phlegm mounted up the neck; there it proved uncontrollable; he waved his hand; was removed from the cot; and he expired almost the same moment, about 15 minutes less 11. And the moon also set shortly after, as if in sympathy!

In that mid-dark night, in that solitary poor cottage, the now orphaned boy of five or six, was innocently sleeping; but the good and widowed wife was weeping over her irreparable loss; while the few friends that were there suppressed their sorrow and sat silent. And none wept, (except the wife); meanwhile came the battalion of his "poor relations", his newly acquired neighbourhood of the poorest labourers of our lowest classes; and every one of them, man, woman and child, stayed on the night, to express sympathy with an illustrious soul, on

whose regal body they deeply gazed with wonder and grief, by the aid of that flickering death-lamp.

The night wore away; one after another, many friends and people were gathered to pay their last Darshan to the hero now lying-in-state; it was decided that out of what were generally believed to be his wishes, the body should be conveyed to Ramnagar for cremation. Desabhakta and a few friends gave a little money; some buses and cars were requisitioned; a band of music—which he loved so well all his life—was arranged; and the Body, with an elongated Caste-mark, and decorated with green leaves, was placed in a car; and the procession moved on, through village after village to Chirala. Enroute, the people paid their last homage to their illustrious leader, to whom they bowed and offered lighted lamps and gave cocoanuts and fruit-offerings.

Ramnagar was reached by 4 p.m., and already there were ten to fifteen thousand people assembled to honour their chief. The body was taken round Chirala and Perala in procession. And after its return to Ramnagar, there was torrential rain for an hour, as if Nature had wept! After the rain stopped, the last rites were performed, in a simple Brahminical manner.

That was the end—the Physical end—of our twice dear, most esteemed and beloved Gopalakrishna.

But the End of Gopalakrishna synchronised, in our view, with the Beginning of a new Spirit; for,

in the place of Physical Gopalakrishna who is dead and gone, stands now a mighty spirit, of a fuller, completed, perfected *Ideal* Gopalakrishna; and just a year after, his death, on the 10th June 1929, the same Ramnagar sands witnessed a Resurrection, where it was sung:

“Gopalakrishna is dead; long live the mighty Gopalakrishna’s spirit!”

## CHAPTER XXX.

## Gopalakrishna: The Man.

In this Chapter we shall read of 'Gopalakrishna the Man' not only as a review of the general impressions created by our hero in the course of the former pages, but to serve as an aid for a strong grip over the real nature and character of Gopalakrishna and his work.

It is too soon perhaps for the world to judge the influence of Gopalakrishna upon the life and destiny of our people. Yet it can't be rash to describe him as a *Sadhaka*, i.e. an experimenter in our real or religious life; and any future worker of the human laboratory in the Andhradesa, we are certain, must take up the work where he left it, whether it is in social reconstruction or political emancipation, human thought or world endeavour.

In one word, he was at least a Brahmin, the Seeker—if not yet the Brahma, the Creator of Andhra Thought and Life.

Nobody, of course, was more aware of his failings and imperfections than ourselves; for, though "made in the image of God", everything in him was still "limited, relative, laboured, discordant, deformed, possessed by struggle, kept by sub-service to one's possessions, lost by the transience and insecurity from long holding".

But alongside this imperfection, there has all



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along been in him "a craving and an inspiration towards perfection". Finite as he was, he had always sought after the infinitude.

"What he aspired to", they say, "is the sign of what he may be"—what he wished to be, the indication of what he may become.

But what of his lack of Sadhana—want of discipline?

In Sadhana, there are two ways, one the Satru-Sadhana, and the other Mitra-Sadhana—the methods of the opposite and the apposite, as he himself described them.

The common and ordinary run of mankind generally adopts the latter of these, for they have all along been accustomed, like the Lanka's weaver-women before Hanuman's great Fire, to beg out imperfection to stay its terrible path.

But Gopalakrishna chose a different method; and, while conscious of the 'faults' and 'falls' of the 'solitary pioneer' in himself, he braved his breast to the steel of his opponents, and like an Akali, allowed himself to be worsted by their blows, nay, even struck by them unto death.

The object, of course, was to test the mettle of his shield; and there is no doubt that, in his case, the "flesh proved too weak", and he perished. But, we suppose, it is no more disparaging of him than

the case of a soldier who faces the enemy and succumbs to his onslaughts. And even as the latter attains to *Veeraswarga*, Gopalakrishna's Spirit now shines superb over all.

Moreover, if, according to the highest conceptions of Religion, all the world over, Death is but a continuation of Life, and when all the ego of the flesh is martyred on the flames of the pyre, where are those imperfections, Pray? And does he not now represent a mere *Ideal*, bereft of faults, shorn of all imperfections, grown into a fulness of Life, resolved into a complete victory over Death, "sublimated", as he himself had once put it, "into history", if not yet into "mystery"?

It is thus, we say, that he was the Seeker, the Brahmin in his life. And though death has temporarily defeated his purpose, we find that he still lives, though in a real sense; nay, he promises to pass into our immortals.

For, we may be sure, never has Andhradesa produced in recent times either a richer or more prolific, or grander or more superb Soul than Gopalakrishna.

As an artist, he was himself a *Rasika*; and he also laid the foundations of a new Temple or Spiritual Art, including Dancing.

As a dramatist, he was undoubtedly the hero of the Andhra stage during the short period of his contact with it in his early life.

As a musician, he was himself no mean singer,\* and he definitely turned the tide of the Andhra music towards the devotional and the religious. His singing of the Tharangams and Dasaradhi Satakam, for example, is acknowledged to be unrivalled on all hands.

His mastery over the English and Telugu languages perhaps forms a separate study by itself; while his extempore పాట verses before Sree Ranganadha reveal the hold he had got even over the Sanskrit Muse. The revival of the 'husbandship' of the author over one's language—"Vanee is my Ranee, or Queen"—as against the 'Mathru-Bhasha'—mother-tongue—cult obtaining around us, is peculiarly his own among our recent writers.

The volume of literary and other works left by Gopalakrishna is not very considerable, indeed; but the quality of what remains is certainly such as to rank him among the highest of our authors, in respect of sheer quality; while, as a critic, he has changed the destinies of Telugu Literature, Art, Poetry and Drama, by turning its vision from the surface inwards.

But it is as a conversationist that Gopalakrishna would live for ever;—and, oh! for a 'Bozzy' who could record his spoken word, which, alas! is now mostly lost!

As an orator, an eminent countryman once declared him to be "the most wonderful orator he had

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\* In Ragams, Kalyani was his great favourite.

heard in the world; it is no wonder that he moved millions”.

In Politics, every one has heard of his Chirala-Perala Campaign which was really an attempt at running a parallel Government; but that is perhaps but a small, though, indeed, a wonderful part of his political genius. And his place as a political thinker and worker has yet to be adjudged. For example, his conception of political sovereignty *viz.*, as the Father-hood of God over His people, and of its location in the seats of His Throne, rather than in the King, King-in-Parliament, or even the ‘People’ of the current, western, political theory is potential of great, almost revolutionary changes in the scientific thought of the world’s polity; while the theory of the husbandship—*Bhu Pathithwam*—of the ruler over the country is capable of supplying the required motive-power for the emancipation of this unfortunate land.

As a revivalist, he was responsible for the unearthing of a good many of our ancient traditions, including the *Smrithi* constitution; Dharmaic Law; Parishadic Sabha. the Palm-leaf address; “our Parliamentary privileges”, entitling one to take liberties with an assembly with “ten moral, ten obscene and ten beautiful sayings”; the Sreemukham; Sapthaham; Deekshasangham; the Prabha; and even the Rs. 116 standard which he adopted for his Bowl has helped at least his successors in the art of begging and has permanently revived a tradition. In all these respects, he understood the language of the people

and revived ideas and methods which have long shumbered in the land.

In the field of Religion and Society, his Brahmana synthesis is his greatest contribution to the Indian life and world thought; and though not many were found favouring it at the time when it was first propounded in 1922, it is a happy sign that the country is coming more and more into line with his thought on the subject; and we hope the day is not far distant when Gopalakrishna will be proclaimed the Prophet of a new World-Harmony.

As an organiser, his Ramadandu and Chirala experiments are two of the most wonderful in our recent history; and while we have no greater achievement to our credit in recent Andhra than the Chirala campaign, his Ramadandu has served as the model for the Hanuman Dal, Maha Virdal and even the Vanarasena of a latter adoption. And to those in the know, it may be of interest that while the North Indian imitation had to create two different organisations to cater to the Saivite and Vaishnavite sections of our society, Gopalakrishna's Ramadandu was a recipe for both, irrespective of their sectional differences; nay, it had a place even for the Muslim in it, who was only a follower of Maulana Shankar-Ali and a worshipper of the Allah-Upanishad!

As an intellectual of the highest eminence, he can be compared to such super-men—and alas! that such intellects should have been wasted away in political turmoil!—as Sree Aurabinda Gosh; and if the

latter aspires to "divinise man", Gopalakrishna tried, in his own humble way, to "humanise the Gods"; and while Sri Aurabindo dreamt of synthesising our Scriptures, as for instance when he said that hereafter our scriptures shall be the Veda, Vedanta, Gita, Upanishad, Purana, Tantra and not excluding the Bible and the Koran; Gopalakrishna had successfully harmonised the Gods of the world, when he converted the 'Dasavatara's of our ancient tradition into the 'Dwadasa' (Twelve) thus finding a place for Christ and Mohamad in the Pantheon of the Prophets of the world; and he also proclaimed as a basis for the new world's Religion, a synthetic federation of the world's existing faiths on the principle of the *Swadharma* of all, which includes "the Hindu Dharma, Muslim Dharma, Christian Dharma, Parsee Dharma, Sikh Dharma etc." And even his Brahmanism, is a more objective form of Sree Aurabindo's jail-message of Sanatana Dharma or the Eternal Religion.

As a man and friend, alas! he was peerless great. "You eat" he told a friend once, "and that fills my stomach". And it did, indeed, too.

And in society, he was the pink of manners and courtesy, though he added to the buoyancy and mirth of the company as none other could.

Above all, as a devotee, Gopalakrishna shines as the Prince of our Bhaktas. He believed in the doctrine of Faith—*Bhakti*—as the only safe guide in this Kaliyuga or materialistic age, and choosing Sri Ramachandra as his *Ishta-Daivam*, he related everything to Him and tried to fill the world with His

Glory. He read 'Rama' in Politics, and Swaraj meant to him not only *Rama-Raj*, but even the letters 'Ra-ma' were interpreted as 'Ra is Rajyam' and 'ma is మనది, i.e. is ours'; he sensed Rama in our Art, and said the only work of Art worth the name in Andhra is a Ramalayam—a temple for God; in language, because the mistress of Telugu letters is the daughter-in-law of Sri Ramachandra; in Volunteer organisation, which came to him as the Ramadandu; in village-building as Ramnagar; in hartal, which meant to him a Rama-Bhajana; in currency, as 'Rama-Raseedulu'; and the Flag as Hanumad-dhwaja;—and all action was *Ramakaryam* and all existence full of Ramachandra.

In all these respects, we are ready to confess that his achievement was still small, even crude and incomplete; but it is necessary to remember that he was concerned only with ideals and not yet with the outer, actual existing realities, which was due to certain obvious limitations of Time and circumstance in the country; and, moreover, if we remember that not only he died at a very early age, inside of forty, but even while he lived, he was easily the most maligned misunderstood and even persecuted man of Andhra-desa, and also bear in mind what the best of us had been at the age of thirty-nine; what a Mahatma Gandhi was at 39; what an Aurabindo Ghosh was at 39; we can imagine what our Gopalakrishna was capable of, if he was born in better circumstances or had he lived on to a maturer age and time.



## S W A S T H I

*"Peace be unto all men!*

*May the Kings rule justly!*

*Plenty ever to Brahmin and the Cow!*

*Bliss to all worlds!*

*May Parjanya send forth timely rains!*

*May the Earth yield plentiful crops!*

*May the curse of the Country be gone!*

*And the Brahmin be without fear!*

*May the childless beget children!*

*Those with sons beget grandsons!*

*May the poor become rich!*

*And every one live on for a hundred autumns!"*

*Aum! That! Sath!*

*Swasthi Sree Krishnarpanamasthu.*



# ERRATA

Page	Line	For	Read
23	6	not bigoted or India. At the same time, he was	India. At the same time, he was not bigoted or
24	25	eclipsed	eclipsed.
74	23	tion,	OMIT
84	2	Of self-sacrifice	self-sacrifice.
99	30	loss	boss.
107	1	on	one
109	12	babies	babes
116	6	their	OMIT
133	2	'Mulana Shankatalli	Maulana Shan- karalli
135	23	grant me	grant us.
146	19	Masters'	Master's
147	21	creed?	creed!
148	10	jottigs	jottings
167	25	Sankars'	Sankara's
169	17	the	OMIT
174	28	spirit of	spirit of a
201	15	now?	now?"
200	28	పురుషాః	పురుషః
258	8	Bravo	Bravo
261	26	లంగరానాలు	లంగరానాలు
316	10	diagnosed	diagnised
346	24	to	for
353	27	in	between
354	24	tranquility	tranquillity
370	Foot-note 1.	experienced	experimented
374	11	nomally	normally



















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